



**A FOOD SOVEREIGNTY INSIGHT INTO LAND, GENDER AND JUSTICE IN
PROVINCIAL AGRI-FOOD GOVERNANCE: LESSONS FROM NON-
GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS IN KWAZULU-NATAL, SOUTH AFRICA.**

BY

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DECLARATION

I, Finn Alexander Hartwell Kinnear, declare that this study is my own work, it has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university. The sources that I have used have been fully acknowledged.

This study is submitted in fulfilment for the requirements for the degree of Master in Sociology in the Faculty of Humanities, School of Social Sciences, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard College, Durban.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the indomitable women of KwaZulu-Natal who farm to feed their families.

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ISIZULU-ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

-(in)*kosi* – King.

-(in)*duna* – Headman.

-(ama)*butho* – Member(s) of a Regiment.

ACRONYMS

ACT – African Conservation Trust

ANC – African National Congress

BSLA – Beneficiary Selection and Land Allocation Policy

CEO – Chief Executive Officer

CoGTA – Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs

COVID-19 – Coronavirus Disease 2019

DEA – Department of Environmental Affairs

DEDTEA – Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs

DLA – Department of Land Affairs

DRDLR – Department of Rural Development and Land Reform

DSD - Department of Social Development

FAO – Food and Agriculture Organisation

FFC – Fair Food Company

FFF – Fair Food Foundation

FPL – Food Poverty Line

GM – Genetically Modified

GMO – Genetically Modified Organism

ICCALRRD – International Conference on Agrarian Land Reform and Rural Development

IDP – Integrated Development Plan

ISRDS - Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Strategy

JV – Joint Venture

KPI – Key Performance Indicator

KZN – KwaZulu-Natal

KZNL – KwaZulu-Natal Legislature

LRAD – Land Redistribution for Agricultural Development

LVC – La Via Campesina

M&E – Monitoring and Evaluation

NDP – National Development Plan

NGO – Non-governmental Organisation

NPFNS - National Policy for Food and Nutrition Security

NPO – Non-profit Organisation

PLAS – Proactive Land Acquisition Strategy

PPP – Public Private Partnership

PTO – Permission to Occupy

RDP – Reconstruction and Development Programme

SAFSC – South African Food Sovereignty Campaign

SAT-KZN – Strategy for Agrarian Transformation KwaZulu-Natal

SDG - Sustainable Development Goal

SKI – Seed Knowledge Initiative

SLAG – Settlement and Land Acquisition Grant

STATSSA – Statistics South Africa

UN – United Nations

UNFAO – United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation

WES-KZN – Women Empowerment Strategy KwaZulu-Natal

ABSTRACT

The author argues that food insufficiency and gender inequity are conjunctive social ills which require concomitant analysis and intervention. To assist, food sovereignty offers a viable heuristic mechanism to critique such a range of injustices associated with present food systems. However, despite the efforts of its promulgators, researchers regard food sovereignty's nexus with gender dynamics as precarious. Given the extent to which agrarian social structures remain bastions of gender inequity, the shortcoming is likely to compromise food sovereignty's transformative potential. Moreover, in acknowledging the concomitant feminisation of agriculture and deprivation, any failures in public and third sector strategy have most profound repercussions for smallholder women. Consequently, the author proposes an intersectional framework of feminist food sovereignty to centralise smallholder women in governance and development praxes. The framework considers a layered food systems approach which highlights the sociological dynamics surrounding intrahousehold food production, processing and consumption. In formulating this framework, the research undertook a qualitative analysis of third sector insights into food sovereignty and gender equity in rural KwaZulu-Natal. These findings furthered the conceptual link between food sovereignty and gender in context. Furthermore, to test the viability of such a framework as an apparatus of critique, analysis of relevant governance arrangements was undertaken. The feminist food sovereignty insight was imbricated within an existing diagnostic framework to engender holistic critique of food systems governance arrangements. Ultimately, the researcher offers multiple recommendations to consolidate governance and development praxes for the dual benefit of gender equity and food sufficiency.

KEY WORDS: Agri-food, gender, governance, land, sovereignty.

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Chapter One: Introduction

“The most common argument is: if women constitute the majority of the world’s food producers, then agricultural policy is a women’s issue. And in so far as patriarchal social relations continue to dominate the globe, then changing agricultural policies will require explicit attention to gender injustice. I suggest that this is a good argument.”

(Portman, 2018: 455).

1.1. Overview

The food system and its associated governance arrangements are failing to achieve adequate access to food for 10.4 million South Africans (STATSSA, 2019). Rural KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), specifically, is characterised by enduring deprivation which governance and development strategies have failed to address. The incipient food crisis has been exacerbated by the socio-economic repercussions of COVID-19 and the Russian-Ukrainian conflict: As of 2022, South Africans are experiencing the highest level of consumer price inflation in five years (STATSSA, 2022). Termeer, Drimie, Ingram, Pereira, and Whittingham (2018) note that such crises invariably manifest the harshest repercussions for the poor. Despite being predominant in small-scale food production (Andrews, Smith and Morena, 2019), women have long borne the brunt of such deprivation (Drèze and Sen, 1989), and act as household shock absorbers during periods of food insufficiency (Dirsuweit, 2020). Hence, the concurrent feminisation of agriculture and deprivation remains a wicked paradox which this research endeavours to confront.

Food sovereignty arose as a viable heuristic mechanism to do so, seemingly able to address a range of injustices in food systems at intrahousehold, interhousehold and institutional levels. Indeed, food sovereignty advocacy maintains an aversion to the hegemonic position of corporate agri-business, and lobbies for the empowerment of small-scale, family farming for just and effective food systems (La Via Campesina, LVC, 2018). Moreover, food sovereignty has, since its advent, claimed a gendered aspect to its transformative mandate by acknowledging the centrality of women in agrarian society and reflecting a concerted effort to address the gender inequities embedded therein (Park, White, and Julia, 2015). However, consistent trepidation around the incongruence of a feminist food sovereignty nexus is apparent (Dekyser, Korsten, and Fioramonti, 2018; Portman, 2018; Bezner Kerr, Hickey, Lupafya, and Dakishoni, 2019; Park, White, and

Julia, 2015; Agarwal, 2014). There manifests potential for dissonance between the movement's pursuit for gender equity and its emphasis on family farming, the latter being considered a bulwark of patriarchal tradition (Dekeyser, Korsten and Fiormonti, 2018), and relying heavily on the invisible and unpaid labour of women (Andrew, Smith and Morena, 2019). As such, food sovereignty's aspirations to enhance smallholder's position, if poorly operationalised, may further cement asymmetric gender roles and inequality in an agrarian milieu (Agarwal, 2014). Despite efforts to augment the feminist nexus to food sovereignty, scholars acknowledge "there is still room within theorising food sovereignty for a deeper, feminist analytical link" (Bezner Kerr et al., 2019: 14). Thus, this dissertation aims to assist in bridging this epistemic gap in an effort to empower smallholder women for gender equity and a better realised right to food.

The initial subversion of smallholder farmers in KZN, of which women manifest the majority, is a longstanding one: The first food regime, characterised by European control over the global economy, saw capitalisation of settler-state food production for the benefit of European consumption (Bernstein, 2016). More significant concern for the commodification of food arguably disrupted the role of the small-scale farmer and engendered a path of consistent subjugation which food sovereignty seeks to overhaul (see LVC, 2018). In KZN multiple causalities, aside from colonial influence, cemented women smallholders' subaltern position including policies of racial oppression, and relegation to bantustans¹ of precarious agricultural potential (see Natives Land Act of 1913; Group Areas Act of 1950). Concomitantly, further empowerment of traditional authority, a historically patriarchal institution, through the Bantu Authorities Act (1951), compounded the subversion of smallholder women, continuing the patrilineal customary law which compromises their access to land. Regrettably, present governance has yet to reconcile these intersectional threats to smallholder women's empowerment and, thus, their subaltern position remains.

Moreover, the increasingly neoliberal concerns for supermarketisation, globalisation, industrialisation, and centralisation of agri-food systems have further entrenched subjugation aligned with race, class and gender asymmetries. Indeed, South Africa's food system is characterised by an intersectional dichotomy running concurrent with the racial and gendered asymmetries one would naturally associate with the country: An

¹ Chirau, Tirivanhu and Chabaya (2020: 14), refer to bantustans as "reserves"; land allocated to black South African's according to racialised Apartheid governance.

approximate 40 000 highly industrial, commercial, predominantly white owned farms, occupy 87% of agricultural land and account for 95% of marketed produce (Kirsten, 2017). A market-led approach to land reform has done little to relieve the marginalisation of black smallholder farming women despite constant state rhetoric and policy implying the converse (see NDP, 2013; NPFNS, 2014). Rather, researchers are consistent in their concerns for the efficacy of land governance in the country (Vink and Kirsten, 2019; Akinola and Kaseeram, 2018; Sauti and Lo Thiam, 2018), and note their particular failures with regards to women's empowerment (Mubeca and Nojiyeza, 2019; Kelly, 2021). Statistics would validate their trepidations: The latest land audit report shows that 13% of farms and agricultural holdings are owned by women and these farms are, on average, smaller (Department of Rural Development and Land Reform, 2017).

The pattern remains that as deprivation increases in the country, small-scale farming is decreasing (Fischer, 2022). It is an anomaly of concern given the extent to which small-scale farming offers potential to buoy household and community food systems (Khoza, Senyolo, Mmbengwa, and Soundy, 2019). Therefore, this research posits for the greater potential of women smallholders to manifest formidable change agents in food systems if given a prominent voice in governance, greater land access, and provided with necessary support from relevant institutions and stakeholders. The argument is backed by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (UNFAO, 2012) who note that should women receive equal access to inputs enjoyed by their male counterparts, yields would increase by an estimated 20-30%. Furthermore, women continue to hold a monopoly over indigenous knowledge concerning food production, processing, and storage that is long tested, and ecologically sound (Asogwa, Okoye and Oni, 2017).

Food sovereignty provides a blueprint for realising this potential for the benefit of gender equity and a better realised right to food. However, a degree of theoretical consolidation is required if food sovereignty is to manifest an effective conceptual apparatus to challenge socially and ecologically unjust food systems and associated governance. Thus, this work is divided into two phases. Initially, phase one seeks to consolidate a contextually sound, intersectional framework of feminist food sovereignty, providing a conceptual apparatus for critique of governance and development praxes. This was achieved through the use of critical realist grounded theory, in analysis of data garnered from semi-structured interviews and participant observation amongst four non-governmental organisations. Despite its growing attention in academia and development praxes, the country's

governance has yet to promulgate tenets of food sovereignty in any substantial way (Ngcoya and Kumarakulasingam, 2016). Hence, and given this lack in public sector, the work centralises the voice of NGOs. Moreover, third sector collaboration with public sector policy has been argued as critical to effective food systems governance (Hospes and Brons, 2016).

Following that, phase two applies the consolidated feminist food sovereignty to existing governance arrangements, thereby inadvertently testing its applicability as a mechanism of critique in context. The conceptual framework will consider the somewhat dissonant narratives of third and public sector's rural development strategy with emphasis upon the upliftment of smallholder farming women in KZN. To do so, the Strategy for Agrarian Transformation KwaZulu-Natal (SAT-KZN, 2015), provides an encompassing example of relevant policy arrangements to be scrutinised. This was done deductively through thematic analysis, and was scaffolded by an existing diagnostic framework for food systems governance put forward by Termeer et al. (2018). Feminist food sovereignty was imbricated within this framework with the aim of providing sound recommendations to third and public sector development strategies to facilitate both gender equity, and better realise the right to food in KZN.

1.2. Problem Statement and Significance

The study maintains both academic and pragmatic significance. Regarding the latter, political and socio-economic injustice is the chief concern. The researcher considers the concomitant feminisation of deprivation and agriculture to be interconnected social phenomena, and a paradox requiring immediate analysis and intervention. Indeed, the anomaly of women being predominantly responsible for household food production, denied of land ownership, whilst being most likely to go hungry is a repugnant one. Hence, the gender asymmetries associated with agrarian society, and the deprivation which pervades the province, manifesting most harshly for women, are foremost on the researcher's mind. The work, therefore, hopes to consolidate rural economies, gender equity, confront deprivation, and better realise the right to food through offering an alternative paradigm for scrutiny of institutional shortcomings in traditional arrangements, governance and development praxes. It is an aspiration concurrent with several United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to which South Africa is committed: Zero hunger; no poverty; good health and well-being; reduced inequalities; peace, justice and strong institutions; and gender equality. To achieve these aims, the work requires attention

to epistemic discrepancies in food sovereignty discourse and advocacy. Addressing two factors are of significance: Regrettably, a lack of study in the South African context engenders doubt as to the geopolitical suitability and socio-economic viability of food sovereignty as a mechanism of agrarian transformation. Secondly, despite food sovereignty's recognition of women's centrality in small-scale farming and agrarian inequity, the conceptual feminist linkage to food sovereignty lacks cogency. The incongruence associated with the gendered aspects of food sovereignty compromises its efficacy as a mode of critique and stymies its transformative potential in policy and development praxes. Consolidating these conceptual shortcomings remains significant to food sovereignty discourse and contributes novel insights toward South African rural sociology more generally.

1.3. Research Objectives

The primary aspiration of the following dissertation is to confront gender inequity, and better realise the right to food by addressing shortcomings in governance and rural development strategies for women smallholders' empowerment. To do so, this work aims to achieve the following theoretical and pragmatic objectives:

i. Academic Objectives

- Consolidate the conceptual rigour of the feminist food sovereignty paradigm as a conceptual model for the benefit of governance critique and enhanced development praxes.
- Thereafter, test the contextual applicability and conceptual efficacy of the framework as a mode of critique.

ii. Pragmatic Objectives

- Investigate the position of smallholder women in the food system and the intrahousehold, interhousehold and institutional arrangements hindering their enfranchisement for the benefit of gender equity and food sufficiency.
- Offer valuable recommendations for policy and development praxis to confront these challenges and enhance the position of smallholder women in the food system for gender equity and a better realised right to food.

1.4. Research Questions

The following questions reflect both the academic and pragmatic objectives illustrated above.

i. Academic Questions

- How may the conceptual rigour of the feminist food sovereignty framework be consolidated?
- How may this model be applied in the context of KZN provincial land and agri-food governance to enhance the position of smallholder women?

ii. Pragmatic Questions

- What challenges are faced by smallholder women which require mitigation for consolidated food systems?
- How may these challenges be mitigated through more effective governance and development praxis for the empowerment of smallholder women?

1.5. Key Definitions

The two following terms require initial clarification:

i. Governance

While terms such as policy, legislature, and strategy refer to written regulations that maintain a given social structure, institution or behaviour, the researcher found this limiting. Given authority over land and agri-food matters is the responsibility of various institutions, including traditional authority, governance provided a more holistic concept, taking account of the multiple actors, apparatuses and processes associated with exercising power.

ii. Smallholder

This work refers to smallholder, family farmer, and small-scale farmer interchangeably to refer to the cultivation of less than 10 hectares. The 10-hectare rule is concurrent with the FAO (2012) which also considers smallholders to be family-centred, using family labour, and that labour contributing, at least in part, to family consumption.

1.6. Dissertation Layout

The following dissertation, in monograph format, is structured as follows:

The initial chapter provided a brief overview and background to the following research. Reasons were given for the social issues which necessitated this work and which influenced the objectives and research questions illustrated above. Chapter Two, Scholarship and Policy Review, is split into two parts to reflect the dual phases of the work. It begins with a brief introduction to the key intersectional concepts of race, class and gender in the context of South African agri-food research. An overview of the national food system, and its interconnected facets relevant to this work, is provided. Attention is paid to insights in food sovereignty and its potential shortcomings and challenges. Part Two concerns governance arrangements. Beginning with an overview of agri-food and land governance, the chapter concludes by illustrating the overarching national arrangements responsible for orchestrating the food system.

Chapter Three, Theoretical Framework, reflects upon the theory and metatheory underpinning this work. Attention is given to critical realism, critical realist grounded theory and its relationship to heterodox economics. Significant concern is placed upon feminist theory, and bell hooks' work particularly, as scaffolding for theory building within this research. Part Two illustrates theories of just governance, aiding the development of a mechanism for critique of authority and governance specifically.

Chapter Four, Research Methodology, considers the methodology employed in this dissertation. Initially, attention is paid to the paradigm, approach and design underpinning the work. Thereafter, the reader is introduced to the research setting and its particular suitability for the study of provincial food systems and associated governance arrangements. Following that, the sampling, collection and analysis methodology is reflected upon. The chapter concludes with an illustration of the delimitations, ethical considerations and limitations which required mitigation.

Chapter Five, Data Analysis and Interpretation, concerned the first processes of data analysis. Following the methodology illustrated in the above Chapter Four, the findings associated with grounded theory methodology are reflected. These findings were garnered from participant observation and several semi-structured interviews with NGOs.

Chapter Six, Governance Analysis and Interpretation, with the aid of the feminist food sovereignty insight garnered in chapter five, offers a critique of current provincial

governance arrangements. As a result, the efficacy of the feminist food sovereignty framework is tested, and strategies for agrarian transformation simultaneously critiqued.

The final chapter of this dissertation, Conclusion, briefly recapitulates and discusses the key findings of Chapters Five and Six. Following this discussion, several recommendations are made to public sector, third sector and for further research.

Chapter Two: Scholarship and Policy Review

Part One: Key Concepts and Current Discourse

2.1. Introduction

In access to both food and the agricultural value chain, the marginalisation of black African women is disproportionately manifested (Mubeca and Njoyezi, 2019; Andrews, Smith and Morena, 2019; Dirsuweit, 2020). Thus, Part One of the review considers the intersectional factors of race, class and gender which affect the disenfranchisement of smallholder black African women and provides an overview of the South African food system in which they find themselves. Thereafter, food systems arrangements are contrasted with the agricultural alternatives advanced by food sovereignty. Specifically, the food sovereignty response is discussed in so much as it diverts from the neoliberal agendas present in ecologically and socially detrimental food systems. Much of the heterodox economic and political aspirations of food sovereignty are cultivated through the praxes of agroecology. Thus, the reader is informed as to the nature of the food sovereignty, agroecology nexus and the extent to which they are regarded as viable mechanisms for augmenting unjust food systems.

According to the concomitant feminisation of poverty and agriculture, these concepts and their associated interventions are turned to the disproportionate levels of deprivation affecting women. The literature review argues for the reasonability of extending feminised poverty into the realms of food security and governance by illustrating the evidence for a highly gender asymmetric agri-food system. Moreover, the review reflects upon the efficacy of third sector efforts for food sovereignty, and the praxes of agroecology, in confronting this phenomenon amongst marginalised agrarian communities, and small-scale farming women particularly. Part One of this review concludes by illustrating the critiques of the food sovereignty paradigm, and agroecology practice, and the challenges facing their greater efficacy.

2.2. Key Concepts in Context

The foci of this research consider the degree of disempowerment experienced by rural, black South African women, specifically, in matters of land access, food production and consumption. The triple burden of race, class, and gender inequality influences the role of these women in the food system: one of underrepresentation in policy making, exclusion

from the agri-food value chain, and the disproportionate threat of malnutrition (Andrews, Smith and Morena, 2019; Nussbaum, 2000). Therefore, this chapter initially reviews the intersectional concepts of race, class, and gender, providing an explanation of South Africa's asymmetric power matrix in which rural black African women in the food system are subverted.

i. Race

Conceptualising race is subject to academic contention and a litany of diagnostic platforms exist to analyse racialised social structures and institutional racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2015). Central to current literature is a scepticism of liberal colour-blind understanding. Conversely, critical race theorist, Martinez (2020), argues that such a perspective ignores systemic racial inequalities, thus, compromising the pursuit of racial equity. Notwithstanding the arguments of critical race theory, such inequalities continue to manifest. Satgar (2019: 1), argue "there is no scientific basis for race and racism to be a part of social reality. Nonetheless, race as a mode of social categorisation and racism as a form of discrimination, violence and oppression persist." History shows racialism to be perennial. However, systemic shifts in temporal, geo-political and social milieus often engender alternate manifestations of bigotry and inequality.

In the South African context, Variava (2020) holds that colonial advent introduced a system of classification which designated black South Africans to positions of cultural, political and economic subordination. The perception would serve as justification for an Apartheid system of legalised segregation and oppression until the country's first democratic elections in 1994. Nevertheless, like Variava (2020), Mashau (2018) argues that South Africa remains plagued by a matrix of coloniality and racialism which continues to play out in the country. Regarding the food system particularly, statistics would concur with Mashau (2018). STATSSA (2019) showed that 23.9% of black African households had inadequate or severely inadequate access to food compared to only 3.4% of white households. At the level of production, the Land Audit Report (2017) by the Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (DRDLR) revealed that 72% of the farms and agricultural holdings in South Africa are in white hands, despite the demographic making up only 10% of the population. Thus, from production to consumption, racial asymmetries can be identified within the food system.

ii. Class

Inextricable to systemic racial asymmetries in South Africa are socio-economic hierarchies. Ndinga-Kanga, van der Merwe and Hartford (2020) argue that in South Africa a white hegemony was formulated by racially constructed socio-economic and political configurations of Apartheid. Particular careers were demarcated for South Africans according to their race and a racially skewed education system sought to relegate black South Africans to more menial positions (Ndinga-Kanga, van der Merwe, and Hartford, 2020). The result was an entrenched wealth and income inequality along racial lines.

These historical legacies ensure South Africa remains one of the most unequal societies in the world. Over the last decade the country has consistently reflected a Gini coefficient of 0.65 household per capita income (STATSSA, 2019). Research concerning wealth inequality found that 10% of the population account for 86% of aggregate wealth and the top 1.0% accounting for a third (Chetterjee, Czajka and Gethin, 2021). The same authors argue that there is no indication of lessened inequality since 1994. Increasingly centralised, and industrialised sectors, such as agriculture, have exacerbated inequality through compounding unemployment and undercutting small-scale farmers (Meterlerkamp, Drimie and Biggs, 2018). Although imbricated by the Apartheid legacy, both income and wealth inequality are further cultivated by an expedient ruling party. “Fraught with factionalism and rising populism,” (Witt, 2018: 5), along with corruption, nepotism and elite capture, statecraft has failed to enact adequate policy to rectify class inequality in land and agri-food needed for effective rural development. Resultantly, South Africa remains plagued by pervasive inequality.

iii. Gender

Although subject to multiple interpretations and definitions in academic discourse, Cislighi and Heise (2020) consider gender a matter of social norms which regulate the behaviour of social actors. Gender socialisation, roles and power dynamics dictate such norms according to differentiations of masculinity and femininity (Cislighi and Heise, 2020). However, power dynamics remain asymmetric, and maintained by a system of patriarchal hegemony according to these normative expectations. In South Africa, notwithstanding the increasing representation of women in state politics, and their greater representation in secondary and tertiary institutions, gender inequality remains embedded in society (Kirkwood, 2018). The extent to which protective legislation and affirmative action policies

have empowered women, especially black African women, is subject to contention (see Fisher, Biyase, Kirsten, and Rooderick, 2020). Indeed, despite increasingly vital public and institutional condemnation, gender-based violence is pervasive, and exclusion from the labour market sees only 47% of women being economically active (Kirkwood, 2018).

Evidence of gender-based marginalisation is particularly apparent in rural areas (Kirkwood, 2018). The patrilineal and patriarchal system of traditional agrarian society still sees a strong tendency toward gendered labour divisions and exclusion of women. However, Magoqwana (2018) argues that racial coloniality fundamentally impacted the role of black African women, disrupting a pre-colonial matriarchal position and relegation to bodies of social reproduction. Moreover, women in agrarian milieus, and the food system at large, certainly experience greater levels of deprivation despite being responsible for the majority of food labourers (Andrews, Smith, and Morena, 2019). Much of this production remains invisible, and unpaid, thus, cementing the unjust gendered division of labour which continues to characterise women's role in food systems today (Andrew, Smith and Morena, 2019).

2.3. An Overview of the Food System in South Africa

South Africa's food system is characterised by apparent duality: on the one side, colossal agribusiness continues to supply the bulk of the country's bought food and remains responsible for food security at national level (Kirsten, 2017). Currently, "it is estimated that the top 20% of commercial farms, around 7,000 highly capitalised operations, account for 80% of South Africa's total agricultural production by value" (Branson, 2016: 4). Conversely, a large cohort of small-scale farmers, buoying their livelihoods and their communities, are excluded from the formal value chain (Pereira, 2014). Longstanding subversion of the latter cultivates inequalities at various levels of the agricultural value chain, including pre-production, production, distribution, processing and consumption. Statistics by von Bormann (2019) concur with those of Branson (2016), and Kirsten (2017) goes further, acknowledging that only 40 000 farms inhabit 87% of the country's agricultural land and produce 95% of the country's total marketed output. Given the argument by Reincke, Vilvert, Fasse, Graef, Sieber, and Lana (2018), for smallholders as being responsible for 70% of the food consumed in sub-Saharan Africa, it is clear South Africa's agricultural outputs are primarily the product of highly industrialised, corporate agribusiness.

However, it is not a question of lacking food supply within the market, but rather of inequitable access to food, that engenders hunger in the country. Scholars note that both domestic production and international trade have achieved national food sufficiency, and have done so for at least the last decade (Chakona and Shackleton, 2019; Pereira, 2014). Notwithstanding, according to recent figures (STATSSA, 2019), unequal access to food has left 1.7 million households vulnerable to food insecurity. Therefore, the continued emphasis upon enhancing production to achieve food security is, somewhat, misguided in so far as equitable access to food, rather than greater food production, is the country's concern.

Despite Khoza, et al. (2019) reflecting the potential of small-hold farming to buoy deprived livelihoods, ensure socio-economic upliftment and access to food, STATSSA (2019) suggest that small-holding farming contributes relatively little to household income in South Africa. Statistics do reflect the continued marginalisation of small-scale black farmers from the formal value chain as described by Devereux (2019) and Khoza et al. (2019). Indeed, Kirsten (2017) notes that small-scale farmers operate predominately on former homelands, which make up 13% of working land, echoing the racialised legacy which characterises South Africa's food system.

Several factors are said to have caused this dysfunction. Firstly, inequality in South Africa has proved perennial. Hence, many shortcomings in the agri-food system are inherited from the socio-economic and political malfeasance of Apartheid governance (Devereux, 2019; Sauti and Lo Thiam, 2019). Conscious legislative attempts to relegate black South Africans to menial labour, forced removals to under-resourced areas, and the disenfranchisement of black South Africans from land and agri-business all contributed to present inequality (Devereux, 2019; Sauti and Lo Thiam, 2019). Second and more recently, global trade deregulations in agri-food industry during the 1980s and 1990s are argued by Termeer et al. (2018) to have caused a shift towards de-localising food systems. Until then, South Africa had maintained a level of control of trade, retailers, and farming commodification practices in the value chain (Kirsten, 2017). However, deregulations related to neoliberal globalisation engendered a vulnerable local market (Termeer et al., 2018). Hence, "food price shocks [are] almost fully transmitted down to local wholesale and retail prices, making poor households extremely vulnerable to food price increases" (Termeer et al., 2018: 88). Consequently, food price crises of 2002/3 and 2007/8, manifested by a weakening exchange rate and food shortages, had a considerably

adverse impact on the livelihoods of the poor (Kirsten, 2017). As a result, the vulnerability and inequality associated with the agri-food systems was laid bare.

Whilst global factors greatly affect the right to food in South Africa, Pereira (2014) acknowledges that local dynamics and socio-economic change are additionally responsible for misshaping food systems: increasing reliance of market purchases, urbanisation, alongside exacerbated unemployment and reliance on welfare mechanisms manifest a “broader political economy of de-agrarianisation” (Pereira, 2014: 5). The trend of lessening small-scale food production, and more significant corporatisation and supermarketisation, threatens volatility in food prices and engenders even greater vulnerability amongst poorer households. Consequently, an alternative modality is required to foster equity, resilience, and access to food in the country.

2.4. The Food Sovereignty Response

Food sovereignty offers a potentially transformative paradigm which aims to better realise the right to food. However, its conceptualisation and parameters remain subject to contestation and perennial shift in academia, governance and third sector advocacy (Carlile, Kessler and Garnett, 2021; Dekeyser, Korsten and Fioramonti, 2018; Chihambakwe, Mafongoya, and Jiri, 2018; Argawal, 2014). The lack of conceptual and contextual cogency potentially hinders its effective translation in governance and public action (Dekeyser, Korsten and Fioramonti, 2018). Additional confusion regarding the parameters of food sovereignty is compounded by the overlapping discourses concerned with the concept of food security (Noll and Murdock, 2020). Food sovereignty was introduced in opposition to the neoliberal and technocratic food security paradigm (Garcia-Sempere, Hidalgo, Morales, Ferguseon, Beutelspacher and Rosset, 2018; Carlile, Kessler and Garnett, 2021). Thus, conceptualisation begins by offering the reader an understanding of food sovereignty in so far as it diverts from the concepts and associated praxes of food security. Noll and Murdock (2020: 1) argue:

“Food security generally focuses on ensuring that people have economic and physical access to safe and nutritious food, while food sovereignty movements prioritize the right of people and communities to determine their agricultural policies and food cultures”.

The pursuit of food security has been considered an economic one and associated with neoliberal policies for centralised and technocratic agriculture, increasing the necessity for industrial inputs, and the greater commodification of food (Noll and Murdock, 2020). To this end, operationalising food security has been viewed by Ghale, Pyakural, Pant and Timsina (2018) as concerned with technological advancement, increased production, and correspondingly greater agricultural corporate monopolisation. However, these invisible-hand responses to food insecurity have been subjected to frequent scepticism due to their socio-economically and ecologically degrading repercussions (see Weis, 2019; Tilzey, 2020 respectively).

Instead, food sovereignty manifests a broader political and economic matrix to confront the social, economic, cultural and ecological ramifications of unjust food regimes and their policies and praxes (Ghale et al., 2018; Agarwal, 2014). In its advent in the early 1990s, food sovereignty began as a movement lobbying for agri-food autonomy and food diversity through the economic and political empowerment of small-scale and family producers (Chihambakwe, Mafongoya, and Jiri, 2018; Carlile, Kessler and Garnett, 2021; Agarwal, 2014). Presently, however, the movement has adopted a broad agenda in its efforts to operationalise socio-ecological justice throughout food systems and levels (Agarwal, 2014).

Food sovereignty is embraced by a diverse body of agents, all of whom maintain an aversion to the capitulation of hegemonic, transnational agri-business (Carlile, Kessler and Garnett, 2021). Hence, the concept offers a radical alternative to the modern food system by facilitating smallholder farming for localised food autonomy. It places both farmer and consumer at the centre of food governance and decision making to confront the socially and ecologically detrimental dominance of industrialised and centralised food systems (Carlile, Kessler and Garnett, 2021). The Declaration of Nyéléni (2007, in Carlile, Kessler and Garnett, 2021: 4) formally defines food sovereignty as, “the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems.” Much of the progress in this regard has been attributed to La Via Campesina (LVC), translated to *‘the peasant way’*. The organisation, regarded as responsible for the incipience of the food sovereignty movement, represents over 200 million small scale farmers across 81 countries (Carlile, Kessler and Garnett, 2021). LVC’s, *‘A guide to food sovereignty’*, (2018: 27) promulgates that,

“Food sovereignty cannot be interpreted as food security or food sufficiency... it is not a policy in itself, or a simple one size fits all solution. Instead it is the commitment of people to make things better by working and organizing and creating new realities together. Food sovereignty is at the basis of human agency and is in itself a celebration of our collective humanity.”

However, such descriptions have been argued as potentially problematic in so far as they facilitate ideological conflict surrounding what that new reality should be, and, if it is not founded in a given policy or uniformed solution, the way it is to be effectively operationalised. Carlile, Kessler and Garnett (2021) acknowledge that food sovereignty advocates are not a monolith but a diverse range of groups and actors, operating with differing interests and contexts. Thus, the food sovereignty movement,

“tends to avoid defining specific visions of food sovereignty and instead encourages members to adopt context-specific solutions... raising questions about what food sovereignty actually means, what a food system based on its principles might look like, and what specific actions might help achieve it”.
(Carlile, Kessler and Garnett (2021: 5).

Although the ability of food sovereignty to be appropriated by a range of actors may manifest a strength for its transformative mandate, it is clear that interpretations of food sovereignty differ radically, and that this remains a concern. The trepidation is concurrent with the sentiments of Dekeyser, Korsten and Fioramonti (2018) who argue that the conceptual broadness of its description licenses conflicting interpretations within the various organisations operating under the banner of food sovereignty. For example, Dekeyser, Korsten and Fioramonti (2018) argue that development practitioners may adopt a food sovereignty approach for the benefit of socio-economic upliftment, governance may adopt aspects to review economic policies, environmental advocates may lean upon agroecological aspects, and unions may espouse food sovereignty in lobbying for farmer's rights. Consequently, Dekeyser, Korsten and Fioramonti (2018) argue that the concept of food sovereignty is yet to reconcile the potentially dissonant narratives and expectations of such a wide range of promulgators. Fractures in food sovereignty discourse, specifically in potentially conflicted contexts, arguably hinder the approach's greater leverage as a

holistic alternative to neoliberal agri-food governance. Hence, the value of research concerning food sovereignty is highly context dependent.

Notwithstanding, LVC's, 'Guide to Food Sovereignty', (2018) puts forward six pillars of that illustrate the fundamentals of food sovereignty action. These tenets include:

1. Focus on food for people: food sovereignty redirects emphasis on the mass commodification of food toward more "sufficient, healthy and culturally appropriate food" for all people, and expressly the marginalised.
2. Values food providers: food sovereignty places food providers at the centre of food governance and action and rejects any policy or program that disenfranchises or threatens small scale farmers, fisherfolk or pastoralists.
3. Localises food systems: food sovereignty aims to confront globalised food systems by placing decision making in local hands and rejecting "unsustainable and inequitable international trade that gives power to remote and unaccountable corporations."
4. Puts control locally: food sovereignty aims to de-alienate food producers from their land and resources by recognising the "rights of local communities to inhabit and use their territories [and]... rejects the privatization of natural resources through laws, commercial contracts and intellectual property rights regimes."
5. Builds knowledge and skills: food sovereignty aims to leverage best practices for agricultural success that do not compromise the environment or the nutritional and cultural integrity of the food through processes like genetic engineering.
6. Works with nature: food sovereignty aims to confront environmentally harmful aspects of industrial agriculture and encourage "beneficial ecosystem functions" including greater resilience and adaption in agriculture via agroecology. (LVC, 2018: 14-15).

Seemingly, food sovereignty provides a framework attuned to the aims of socio-economic and political justice and these pillars formed the basis from which the researcher aimed to conceptualise food sovereignty in context (see Chapter Five). However, despite LVC's (2018) attempts to provide guidelines on food sovereignty, the framework is heavily context-dependent according to differing agrarian milieus, geopolitical dynamics, and the aspirations of the respective actors therein. Given the lack of hermeneutic clarification and contestation surrounding the concept of food sovereignty, further work is required to

develop a contextually sound framework for enhanced transformative capability. Hence, the work aims to theorise food sovereignty, specifically from a feminist perspective, via engagement with a range of actors, for consolidated advocacy in governance and development practice in KZN.

2.5. Agroecology, and the Food Sovereignty Nexus

Although its advent as an alternative to industrial agriculture was largely unheeded in the academy, agroecology is increasingly considered a viable solution to the socio-ecological agri-food crises exacerbated by industrial agri-business (Giraldo and Rosset, 2017; Pereira, Wynberg and Reis, 2018). The shift has been acknowledged by the UNFAO (2022: np), noting that agroecology has become “concurrently a science, a set of practices and a social movement and has evolved as a concept over recent decades to expand in scope from a focus on fields and farms to encompass the entirety of agriculture and food systems.” Thus, agroecology is an ever-changing concept in so far as it incorporates several aspects of food production which challenge the socio-ecologically harmful effects of highly industrialised, and exploitative, agri-food systems promulgated by the green revolution.²

Among other socio-economic and political aspirations, agroecology is argued to be fundamentally concerned with “the application of ecological concepts and principles for the design and management of sustainable agricultural systems” (Pereira, Wynberg and Reis, 2018: 4). Thus, at its core, agroecology attempts to operationalise farming methods aligned with a positive human-nature interconnection, argued by the UNFAO (2022) to be integral to fostering a sustainable agricultural model. In this undertaking, agroecology’s parameters, like food sovereignty, shift considerably according to agrarian context and geopolitical milieu. Therefore, Pereira, Wynberg and Reis (2018) note that agroecology requires participatory methodology, and community involvement to manifest effective agricultural policy and practice. Despite the environmental nuance required of agroecological practice, Williams, Pelser, and Black (2018) have identified eight practices as pivotal to agroecological success in South Africa. These include:

² The green revolution refers to a period in the 1950s and 1960s of global technological advancement in agricultural production to secure more extensive outputs. This was achieved by increasing farming areas, double double-cropping, using modified crop varieties, and increasing the use of inorganic fertilizers and pesticides (John and Babu, 2021).

1. *Discouraged use of synthetic fertilizers,*
2. *No synthetic pesticides,*
3. *No GMOs or commercial hybrids,*
4. *Encouraged composting,*
5. *Fertility bedding,*
6. *Use of grey water,*
7. *Mulching,*
8. *Saving seed of traditional crops.*

The methods have been considered imperative to the ecological aspirations of food sovereignty in so much as they divert from the scorched earth practices associated with industrial farming and the green revolution. Agroecology adopted a biologically diverse and resilient method of farming, able to “reduce land degradation and cool the planet” (Satgar and Cherry, 2019: 323). The relationship between food sovereignty and agroecology is a close one; so much so, that Martinez-Torres and Rosset consider advocates of food sovereignty to argue that “food sovereignty without agroecology is hollow discourse” (2014: 146). Hence, the agroecological model of food production has, to some extent, a political narrative to its confrontation of globalised and industrialised agriculture. However, although its ecologically practical solutions are considered socially and ecologically beneficial, the extent to which the heterodox political underpinnings of agroecology remain perennial is in question (Giraldo and Rosset, 2017). Many stakeholders continue to greenwash their production, and the use of ‘agroecology’ as a means of doing so, is a legitimate concern. Giraldo and Rosset (2017: 1) argue “there is enormous risk that agroecology will be co-opted, colonized and stripped of its political content” by pro-neoliberal policy and industrial agriculture.

Considering this potential ideological dilution of agroecology, food sovereignty offers greater socio-political backing as a heterodox approach to food system governance (Gliessman, Friedmann and Howard, 2019). Thus, agroecology is consistently associated with the concept of food sovereignty in academia, governance and advocacy (Bezner Kerr et al., 2019; Anderson, Maughan and Pimbert; 2019; Williams, Pelser and Black, 2018). Indeed, many of the aspirations of agroecology align with the philosophies of food sovereignty, including personal and national autonomy, rejecting corporate food markets, facilitating local collectives, and a positive human-land interconnection (Pereira, Wynberg

and Reis, 2018). As such, food sovereignty organisations “see agroecology as a way to work towards food sovereignty where the control of seed and land remains in the hands of farmers, and the land is used in an ecologically sustainable way” (Williams, Pelser and Black, 2018: 1). Therefore, for many NGOs, agroecology is an ecologically-sound mechanism which offers a means of realising the greater-established frameworks and objectives of food sovereignty.

Gliessman, Friedmann and Howard (2019: 92) identify the importance of facilitating this affinity between agroecology and food sovereignty by arguing that greater political clout of food sovereignty, its “engagement with power in many parts of the industrial food system,” offers the greater efficacy in lobbying for the socio-ecologically beneficial aspects of agroecology. Conversely, for food sovereignty action and advocacy, agroecology offers a legitimate agricultural praxis for their ideological confrontation of socially and ecologically harmful food systems (Gliessman, Friedmann and Howard, 2019). This conjunction offers a formidable partnership, more readily capable of confronting hegemonic industrial agriculture via the ecological pragmatism of agroecology and the better-established political and social frameworks of food sovereignty.

2.6. The Feminisation of Poverty and Agriculture

Modupe, Bamidele, Olakunle, Susan and Oweye (2019: 15), find “evidence indicated that poverty reduction and food security do not necessarily move in tandem”. However, Modupe et al. (2019), do not make clear their definition of poverty. Thus, this section begins by considering poverty and expressly the feminisation of poverty, as a term denoting a state of deprivation rather than lacking financial income or wealth. Indeed, the term ‘poverty’, its parameters, and measurement are still widely contested, and its definition differs significantly according to the context and discipline in which its research finds itself (Reeves, Parsell and Liu, 2020). Therefore, it is pivotal to define the parameters of poverty to include an unrealised right to food, given the research’s objective to confront the anomalous feminisation of agriculture alongside feminised deprivation.

Gumede (2021: 1) argued the feminisation of poverty to be founded on evidence reflecting an increasingly disproportionate number of women experiencing poverty. This evidence is overwhelming, and is now a universally acknowledged phenomenon which is subject to little contest within the academy (Sulikah and Schubert, 2018; Nwosu and Ndinda, 2018). Moreover, not only are women recognised as disproportionately vulnerable to poverty but

that poverty is likely to be more severe and longer lived (Nwosu and Ndinda, 2018; Nussbaum, 2000). However, as noted by Asmorowati and Schubert (2018), views of the feminisation of poverty are often 'narrow' in so much as their focus is primarily upon monetary income.

Indeed, considerable scholarship surrounding poverty has been concerned with one-dimensional, numerical understandings, for example the idea that someone can be considered poor based on income, GDP or other numerical metrics (Reeves, Parsell and Liu, 2020). This focus has been considered "narrow... undermining the influence of poverty research on policy" (Saunders and Naidoo, 2015: 417), as they fail to reflect the accurate standard of living experienced by individuals or communities. Rather, poverty may take the form of inability to access various necessities or resources required for human well-being, regardless of their income (Saunders and Naidoo, 2015), such as food. Thus, a broader, normative view of poverty is considered to offer a holistic investigation of matters of deprivation and well-being, especially to manifest effective policy recommendations and development praxes.

This shift in view, to a great extent, aligned with Sen's (1999) conceptual understanding of poverty as a state of being deprived of necessary elements and opportunities required to live a fulfilling life. It must be noted, that Sen's seminal and profound work on deprivation was central to this research in so far as Sen (1999) postulates "that when making normative evaluations, the focus should be on what people are able to be and do, and not on what they can consume or on their incomes" (Sen, 1999 in Robeyns, 2003: 62). Conceptualising poverty via this matrix, the capability approach, thus offers this research a holistic and reasonable interpretation of poverty as a state of deprivation of capabilities. Furthermore, the work also acknowledges the interconnection between adopting such an approach and cultivating greater efficacy in public policy. Sen (1999: 527) argues that "these capabilities can be enhanced by public policy, but also, on the other side, the direction of public policy can be influenced by the effective use of participatory capabilities by the public." Thus, the work views governance in relation to capabilities, and in centralising the voice of civil society, is both a means of consolidating governance in line with directly exercising that capability in the context of food systems transformation.

Literature on the capability approach is made more applicable to this research in so much as considerable attention can be placed on the feminisation of poverty and intrahousehold

gender asymmetries in food distribution (Drèze and Sen, 1989: 79). The scholarship is significant in explaining the unequal levels of poverty experienced by women (Robeyns, 2003; Nussbaum, 2000). A seminal promulgator of the capability approach, Nussbaum (2000: 219), note that women are “less well-nourished than men, less healthy, and more vulnerable to physical violence and sexual abuse.” These, according to Nussbaum (2000), are elements of poverty that would be lost in a unidimensional analysis of income or consumption resulting in an incomplete review of the feminisation of poverty and averse to incorporation of food inequality discourse.

In the food systems context, a preponderance of research, globally, indicates that women experience disproportionately greater levels of deprivation throughout (Modupe et al., 2019: 15; Misra, 2017; Satgar and Cherry, 2019; Ghale, Pyarkural, Devkota, Pant, and Timsina, 2018; Dirsuweit, 2020; Cheteni, Khamfula, and Mah, 2019; Agarwal, 2014). However, this injustice remains somewhat exacerbated in the global South. The work of Misra (2017) in Bangladesh, Modupe et al. (2019) in Nigeria, Ghale et al. (2018) in Nepal, and Dirsuweit in South Africa (2020) all found disproportionate levels of deprivation experienced by women in the food system. One recurring cause thereof was structural household asymmetries cultivated by patriarchal norms: Dirsuweit (2020) argued that during periods of greater deprivation women are often expected to act as the household shock absorber by forgoing their own nutritional needs in favour of their relatives. Moreover, these gender-based asymmetries in food systems extend to agricultural production, the ability for women to gain agricultural capital, and especially in the form of land (Daramola, 2021). Patriarchal systems imbricated at an institutional level have compounded the deprivation of women, exacerbated by women’s inability to gain land ownership. In KZN this has been expressly recognised (Ngcoya and Kumarakulasingam, 2016).

Paradoxically, however, food production has increasingly become the responsibility of women according to the feminisation of agriculture (Hans and Hegde, 2020). The central role of women in the food system is becoming increasingly recognised (Wanjiru, 2021; Loubser, 2020), and women are considered responsible for an estimated 60 to 80% of food output in developing countries. However, the exact extent to which women maintain such a predominant position in agriculture remains contested in academia (see Doss, Meinzen-Dick, Quisumbing, and Theis, 2018). However, much of the labour agrarian women do is invisible and unpaid such as maintaining gardens, retrieving water and fuel

and the transportation of produce (Wanjiru, 2021; Modupe et al., 2019). Given that such labour is, by its nature, invisible, undocumented and unquantified, it is unsurprising scholars have been unable to agree upon the extent of the feminisation of agriculture.

Notwithstanding, in terms of agricultural employment in South Africa, there are fewer full-time female employees than males (Loubser, 2020). However, when part-time, informal and seasonal employment is analysed, women make up the majority (Loubser, 2020; Wanjiru, 2021). Loubser (2020), acknowledges that this entrenches greater inequality and exploitation of women in the food system in so far as women are not afforded the protection and security associated with formal employment. Moreover, Loubser (2020) found that regarding commercial agriculture, there remain far fewer female farm owners (22% of farm owners are women in KZN). Conversely, women continue to dominate the small-scale farming sector (61%) in the province; a factor perceived to be the potential consequence of traditional labour divisions (Ngcoya and Kumarakulasingam, 2016). However, given challenges to women's ability to gain land tenure under patrilineal customary governance (Khuzwayo, Chipungu, Hangwelani and Lewis, 2019), the feminisation of agriculture and women's predominance in production is unlikely to stymie the increasing feminisation of poverty.

2.7. Food Sovereignty and Uplifting Women.

Scholarship suggests that food sovereignty and agroecology have the potential to offer scaffolding for the centralisation of women in agriculture and confront feminised poverty in agrarian communities (Bezner Kerr, Hickey, Lupafya and Dakishoni, 2019; Stein, Miroso and Carter; 2018). However, researchers are consistent in their recognition of potential shortcomings and epistemic contradictions which comprise food sovereignty's ability to operationalise these objectives (Portman, 2020; Agarwal, 2014; Bezner Kerr et al., 2019; Stein, Miroso and Carter; 2018). Food sovereignty has, since its advent, highlighted a commitment to the pursuit of empowering women (LVC, 2018: 12):

“consistently attempting to subvert the traditional models of male dominance in agricultural organizations by creating spaces by and for women. This process has empowered women across the globe, the struggle for food sovereignty is a struggle for women's rights”.

However, the legitimacy of this commitment has been contested in academia and there is concern that the movement has co-opted a women's liberation aspect to its endeavours, despite its fundamental strife being for farming rights, to garner a wider range of support (Werkheise and Noll, 2014 in Navin, 2015). Researchers have identified potential contradictions and discrepancies requiring further consideration (Dekeyser, Korsten and Fioramonti, 2018; Portman, 2020; Park, White and Julia, 2015; Bezner Kerr et al., 2019; Agarwal, 2014): Agarwal (2014: 1249) rightly questions a lack of emphasis on how food sovereignty will confront unequal gender dynamics by noting that food sovereignty's, "emphasis on family farming, which often depends on unpaid labour, could go in the opposite direction, unless intra-household inequalities are addressed". Similarly, Dekeyser, Korsten and Fioramonti (2018: 8) note that food sovereignty "advances gender equality while it simultaneously advocates for smallholder farmers, one of the fiercest bastions of paternalism". Bezner Kerr et al. (2019: 2) similarly argue that "taking food sovereignty seriously would mean addressing gender inequality that is structurally embedded in agricultural standards". Given these valid concerns, it is clear that further work is required to a bolster the feminist-food sovereignty interconnection.

However, that is not to say scholarship has failed to reflect the potential viability of such an interconnection as an effective transformation strategy. Despite what Bezner Kerr, et al. (2019) consider a paucity of empirical research applying a gender-based analysis to food sovereignty, their salient work on agroecological interventions in Malawi, specifically, also gives evidence for lacking food sovereignty and traditionally exploitative intrahousehold gender dynamics. It was made clear by Bezner Kerr et al. (2019), that such initiatives had the potential to transform the gendered divisions of labour in households by empowering women through greater monopoly on household food procurement. Moreover, the nature of the food sovereignty modality contributed to declining instances of gender-based conflict within several households. Interhousehold, food sovereignty initiatives also encouraged the empowerment of women in the wider community. It was argued by Stein, Miroso and Carter (2018: 1) that the frameworks associated with food sovereignty allowed women to be "actively involved in defining their own food systems" at a community level. Thus, effective implementation of food sovereignty initiatives contributes to an intersectional redress of social ills and cultivated increased communal agency over and above personal intrahousehold upliftment.

Little to no scholarship has attempted to develop a feminist food sovereignty perspective of KZN, or South Africa. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, the work by Ngcoya and Kumarakulasingam (2016) is the only example of food sovereignty insight in the province. Given that food sovereignty and agroecology require specific attention to context and the diversity of agrarian societies, the extent to which the same modalities, adopted by the likes of Bezner Kerr et al. (2019) and Stein, Miroso and Carter (2018), would prove effective in KZN is questionable. Notwithstanding, the work by Ngcoya and Kumarakulasingam (2016) in the province showed some indication that food sovereignty action and enhanced gender equity interconnect. However, given Ngcoya and Kumarakulasingam's (2016) work involved ethnographic methodology with focus on only one participant, a cogent knowledge of the extent of this interconnection remains limited. Although limited, the single case put forward by Ngcoya and Kumarakulasingam (2016) did hint at the potential efficacy of a feminist food sovereignty framework in the KZN context.

Ngcoya and Kumarakulasingam (2016) found that ancestral knowledge vis-à-vis permaculture, supplemented by third sector agroecological programs, facilitated the participant's efforts for food sovereignty. Moreover, epistemic collaboration between small-scale farmers contributed to greater networking and public action. These positive aspects were cultivated further by the efforts of a third sector organisation, who, together with a women farmer's collective, revived the traditional seed blessing ceremony, an opportunity to share knowledge, seeds, pray for rains and educate others (Ngcoya and Kumarakulasingam, 2016). As noted by Asogwa, Okoye and Oni, (2017: 77) "rural women particularly are one group within a community who hold enormous indigenous knowledge of food production, storage and processing which can assist in reducing food insecurity and hunger". Evidence suggests that this *modus operandi* has proved successful for food sufficiency in the South African context (Netshifhefhe, Kunjoku and Duncan, 2018). As such, literature indicates the potential for food sovereignty and the agroecological methods associated with leveraging IKS to facilitate both gender equity and better realised right to food.

2.8. Critiques and Challenges of the Food Sovereignty Paradigm.

Transformation of the industrial agri-food system, towards a food sovereignty paradigm, is subject to several hinderances which compromise its greater success both in South Africa (Siebert, 2019) and globally (Gliessman, Friedman and Howard, 2019). Firstly, the

current model of corporate-centralised food governance manifests the primary challenge to the success of food sovereignty and agroecology movements (Gliessman, Friedman and Howard, 2019). The neoliberal market governance of food systems is one such challenge (Gliessman, Friedman and Howard, 2019), wherein food sufficiency is consistently addressed as a matter of lacking production capacity. Moreover, this mode of production, emphasising profit, threatens to co-opt both food sovereignty and agroecology to greenwash ecologically degrading industrial agri-practises (Gliessman, Friedman and Howard, 2019). Thus, the radically transformative potential of food sovereignty and agroecology is potentially compromised.

According to the same neoliberal underpinnings, practice and policy in agri-food governance is therefore geared toward technological advancement; the result is a continually industrialised, mechanised, and centralised system of food economy (Gliessman, Friedman and Howard, 2019). According to Gliessman, Friedman and Howard (2019: 100), the greater centralisation of the food market results in “a number of ‘lock-ins’ that lead to vicious cycles of debt, chemical dependence, and unequal diets for rich and poor consumers, further reducing the possibilities for moving towards more sustainable alternatives”. Siebert (2020) makes a similar argument in the South African context, albeit further down the supply chain in which she considers formalisation and supermarketisation to have economically excluded independent small-scale farmers in the country. Thus, market capitalisation and an increased monopoly over the agricultural system at various levels of the supply chain, from production to consumption, may hinder the efforts of third sector food sovereignty advocates to transform agricultural policies and praxes.

Compounding the marginalisation of small-scale farmers, technocratic and bureaucratic regulations around seed and plant variety compromise the greater success of food sovereignty and agroecology (Gliessman, Friedman and Howard, 2019). Gliessman, Friedman and Howard (2019) state that agrichemical conglomerates, and their possession of patented, genetically modified seed, have made the exchange of seed and plant varieties difficult, specifically for small-scale food producers. The validity of this argument is substantiated by the objections of Biowatch (2019) to the permit application of Pioneer Hi-Bred RSA for the trial release of GM maize. Biowatch (2019) argued for several concerns surrounding the trial of the GM maize, both ecological, socio-economic, and health related. Biowatch’s objection was unsuccessful. Thus, state regulation and

intervention in the free trade of seed and crop varieties, and other forms of agri-food governance on the side of neoliberal market forces, manifest a barrier to transition toward agroecology and food sovereignty.

Linked to genetic modification and other technological advancement, food sovereignty, and praxes of agroecology, a laborious and challenging method of farming, have been treated with trepidation as a scalable solution to confront the global food crisis (Mendoza, Paelmo, Makahiya and Mendoza, 2020). As noted by Mendoza et al. (2020), Africa's population is argued to increase considerably by 2050 necessitating a 50 to 100% increase in food production. There is question as to whether agroecology, and indeed small-scale farming generally, will be able to satisfy the continent's need for food (Cherry, 2016). However, several causalities associated with industrial agriculture threaten greater food insufficiency such as lacking climate resilience. Thus, to a great extent, the academy has argued for agroecology's sustainability as offering the potential for significant contribution to offsetting future hunger (Cook et al., 2016; Mendoza et al., 2020). This is also facilitated through mitigating input expenses and greater yields (Kesselman, Ngcoya and Casale, 2021) and thus enhancing the food production required to ensure food sufficiency.

However, regarding consumption, there remains a question on whether dietary preferences and norms will cotton to agroecologically produced foods (Kesselman, Ngcoya and Casale, 2021). Research into food sovereignty backed agroecological interventions in Johannesburg argued that the "dietary norms and practices of Johannesburg residents are poorly aligned to the production of requirements and outputs of urban agroecology" (Kesselman, Ngcoya and Casale, 2021: 480). Consequently, the transformative potential of food sovereignty and agroecology to garner traction was somewhat stymied and the question remains: if food sovereignty, and subsequent agroecological praxes were to bypass neoliberal market forces and policy would people favour agroecologically produced food?

The effectiveness of a food sovereignty agenda, being concerned with the cultivation of small-holder farming rights, is significantly interconnected with matters of land governance and tenure (Borras, Frand, and Suárez, 2015). Undeniably, "efforts to construct food sovereignty often involve struggles to reconstitute democratic systems of land access and control", and the question of land reform, and its limitations are identified in this regard

(Borras, Frand and Suárez, 2015: 600). Questions surrounding land restitution, and reform, are central to debates concerning agri-food governance in South Africa, and policies are yet to rectify the consequences of forced removals associated with Apartheid governance. Furthermore, Siebert (2019: 2), argued, in reference to food sovereignty's lacking manifestation in policy in South Africa, that it can be "tied back to the country's history of oppression... [and] many of today's smallholders are still waiting for further governmental efforts to rectify the injustices of Apartheid era". It remains apparent, therefore, that mitigating challenges surrounding land are central to the success of food sovereignty in this research's context.

Furthermore, and profound for this research, Agarwal (2014) argues for how the feminisation of agriculture, alongside the continued exclusion of female smallholder farmers from land rights, as detrimental to the aspirations of food sovereignty. If food sovereignty is to rely on a transition to greater food sufficiency through the help of smallholder farmers, now a growing number being women, the lacking ability of women to gain access to land and alternative agricultural sources then compromises the greater success of food sovereignty. Agarwal's (2014) review reflected a generally lower yield resulting from female farmers and this has been attributed to women's lack of secure land rights and access to agricultural inputs. Hence, this work includes matters of land governance in an effort to facilitate the holistic view of agrarian inequities associated with the need for a gendered food sovereignty framework.

2.9. Conclusion

Literature revealed that failure of the food system in South Africa is a consequence of several factors including: Apartheid legacy, climate change, shifts in agri-business following global trade deregulations, vulnerability to global food shocks in 2008, maladministration and poorly operationalised governance. Thus, academic consensus primarily reflected a disparaging view of a dichotomous food system, particularly regarding their lack of transformation for increasing enfranchisement among smallholder farmers. In offering a critique of agri-food governance and potential solutions to this crisis, this review looked to literature concerned with food sovereignty. Both in its conceptualisation and socio-political advocacy, food sovereignty proved to be a potentially viable paradigm that could confront a socio-economic and ecological failures. To garner a greater understanding of the manner in which food sovereignty aims to confront systemic shortcomings, this work reviewed the agroecology, food sovereignty nexus. It provided

evidence for the efficacy of this partnership in constructing the scaffolding required for an effective shift in the food system. This work then reviewed the relevance and profundity of adopting a gendered view of agri-food governance by reflecting upon literature concerned with the feminisation of poverty and agriculture. Literature suggested that in all realms of the agri-food value chain, from land tenure, production, and down to household consumption, women experienced disproportionate levels of deprivation. It was made clear that in every aspect of agri-food governance regarding smallholder farmers, a gendered view is imperative to any formulation of an alternative food matrix. However, in reviewing the feminist-food sovereignty interconnection, it was clear such a framework requires consolidation to effectively augment governance and development praxes.

Chapter Two: Scholarship and Policy Review

Part Two: Agri-food and Land Governance in South Africa

2.10. Introduction

Part two of this chapter provides an overview of agri-food and land governance in South Africa. It navigates several overarching strategies and parent policies relevant to this research. These include the National Development Plan (NDP) and the National Policy for Food and Nutrition Security (NPFNS). Due concern is also given to the Fetsa Tlala Integrated Food Production Initiative (Fetsa Tlala) as an exemplar of the manifested policy response. The reader is provided with an understanding of legislative arrangements responsible for governing agri-food systems at local, provincial and national levels. Due consideration to literature reflecting policy congruence and efficacy locates this study within the broader field of critique, advertently promulgating the viability of this research to extent the debate. Specifically, identified shortcomings in both neoliberal policy, and food sovereignty discourse, will inform the reader as to the relevance of this research's objective to find cogency and greater efficacy amongst such narratives for more effective governance arrangements. Regarding land governance, the land matter in South Africa is incredibly intricate. Thus, this overview reflects upon the dissonance associated with the market-led versus state-led debate. The parent policies associated with land distribution are considered. These include the White Paper on South African Land Policy, the Implementation Plan for Proactive Land Acquisition Strategy (PLAS), and the recent Beneficiary Selection and Land Allocation Policy (BSLA). Diligence is paid to the gendered concerns of the above governance arrangements, and the extent to which evidence suggests their success in facilitating a just food system.

2.11. An Overview of South African Agri-Food Governance

Recognising food inequality in South Africa, it is apparent that agri-food governance has failed to accomplish its constitutional mandate, the ultimate directorate for all South African policy. This mandate ensures “the right to have access to...sufficient food and water [and] the state must take reasonable legislative and other measures...to achieve the progressive realisation of each of these rights” (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996: 11). However, there remains considerable acknowledgement of several shortcomings, exhibited in present governance arrangements, that compromise their efficacy (Satgar and Cherry, 2019; Sauti and Lo Thiam, 2019; Termeer et al., 2018;

Siebert, 2019; Kirsten 2017; Chakona and Shakleton 2019; Boatemaa, Dimie and Pereira, 2014).

Since colonial settlement, South African agricultural and land policy has been characterised by gendered and racial discrimination. The Native Land Act of 1913, and the following Group Areas of 1950, saw extensive forced removals of black South Africans and considerable restrictions on land ownership and tenure. Although constituting only 10% of the population, white South Africans, toward the end of Apartheid in 1994, controlled 10 times the amount of land (Sauti and Lo Thiam, 2019). Much of the legislative frameworks of today are underpinned by the need to address these lingering discrepancies.

Thus, while many policy makers in the global north look to mitigate the precarious future of food systems and the challenges of climate change, South Africa must continue to address the past. Hence, Witt (2018) notes rural development has adopted three phases following the end of Apartheid. Initially (1994-2000), efforts to redress Apartheid inequity was manifested by the Reconstruction and Development program (RDP). Following, phase two (2000-2009), saw the implementation of the Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Strategy (ISRDS) which indicated a concerted recognition of the dualistic characteristics of the food system. The third phase refers to 2007 to date, which prioritised rural development to the greatest extent. The following policy review pays concerted attention to these latter policies, bar particularly influential governance arrangements such as the White Paper on South African Land Policy (1997).

Arrangements have been argued as superficial, and insufficient in operationalising genuine transformation at a systems level (Siebert, 2019; Kirsten, 2017; Termeer et al., 2018). Indeed, these reforms have done little to change the situation of black South African farmers (Sauti and Lo Thiam, 2019), and the systemic issues of a racially biased food system continue. Following international market deregulation in the 1980s, South Africa followed suit by increasing the liberalisation and globalisation of the food system, a modality which characterises the country's governance arrangements today (Termeer et al., 2018; Kirsten, 2017). Kirsten (2017) clarifies the shortcomings associated with this deregulation, coming to a pinnacle in the mid-1990s, which threatened greater volatility in the domestic agri-food market. Similarly, Termeer et al. (2018: 88) have argued that these neoliberal policies have exposed the local market to greater vulnerability and neglected a

pro-poor perspective. Thus, without structural augmentation of governance at a food systems level, increasing crises posed by climate change, energy shortages, post-pandemic inflation, foreign conflict, and other shocks resultant from heavy global market reliance, will exacerbate food injustice.

Regarding contingencies, evidence put forward by Kirsten (2017) would suggest that the historical response from the state has been to rely increasingly on short-term interventions to mitigate food crises, rather than confront them at structural levels. Even following the food price crises of 2002/3 and 2007/8, governance failed to shift modalities, rather, the state relied, and expanded upon, existing welfare schemes to help mitigate repercussions albeit temporarily (Kirsten, 2017). Furthermore, Pereira (2014) argues that linkages of agriculture and livelihoods have been diminished as a result of increasing reliance on social welfare grants. Thus, rather than contest the shortcomings of agri-food governance at a systems level, these short-sighted policies have, in fact “reinforced the country’s reliance on...interventions that deal directly with relieving the burden of food price inflation for poor households, such as welfare payments, school feeding schemes and food packages” (Termeer et al., 2018: 88). In concurrence, Chakona and Shakleton (2019) argue that social grants aimed at alleviating hunger were found to be ineffective and determined that capacity building and increased awareness around alternative food production were more effective solutions.

Mcintyre (2018) similarly asserts that much legislature is born from the tendency to view food insecure people as merely beneficiaries of welfare, or charity, rather than independent and active stakeholders in the food system. Little consultation or integration of historically disadvantaged and marginalised persons in the decision-making process has resulted in misaligned agri-food policy in South Africa (Boatema, Drimie and Pereira, 2018; McIntyre, 2018). This incongruence is compounded by a lack of coherence amongst the relevant organs of governance. In their analysis of 17 South African policies on food and nutrition security, Boatema, Dimie and Pereira (2018) argued that there remains inconsistency amongst the several departments responsible for implementation. A lack of cohesion amongst departments, governance, and implementation has exacerbated the inefficiency of state confrontation of food insecurity (Boatema, Drimie and Pereira, 2018). Ultimately, this ineffective and autocratic process of governance further marginalises the vulnerable and contributes to the injustice of the food system (Boatema, Drimie and Pereira, 2018; Termeer et al., 2018).

2.12. Agri-Food Parent Policies

The following policy examples represent encompassing frameworks in South Africa's agri-food governance. Although this is not an illustration of all relevant policies, these examples reflect the overarching, national agendas associated with food system governance in the country.

i. National Development Plan

The NDP provisions the socio-economic pathway responsible for guiding South African development policy. Gazetted in 2012, the NDP acts as an intersectoral blueprint for manifesting a better standard of living for South Africans by the year 2030. Regarding agri-food, the NDP provides a fundamental platform for inclusive dialogue across various sectors, acknowledging the need for multi-sector, interdisciplinary collaboration to achieve the agricultural development objectives (Delport, 2019). These agricultural strategies include:

1. *Expanded irrigated agriculture.*
2. *Use of underused land in communal areas and land-reform projects for commercial production.*
3. *Pick and support commercial agriculture sectors and regions that have the highest potential for growth and employment.*
4. *Support job creation in the upstream and downstream industries. Potential employment will come from the growth in output resulting from the first three strategies.*
5. *Find creative combinations between opportunities. For example, emphasis should be placed on land that has the potential to benefit from irrigation infrastructure; priority should be given to successful farmers in communal areas, which would support further improvement of the area; and industries and areas with high potential to create jobs should receive the most support.*
6. *Develop strategies that give new entrants access to product value chains and support from better-resourced players. (NDP, 2012: 219).*

It is clear differing interpretations and critiques of the NDP's (2012) agricultural agenda and efficacy exist. Despite being concerned with agri-food processes, Hendriks (2012: 13) argues that the NDP (2012), remains "silent on food security and largely ignores agriculture and fails to articulate the challenges or threats facing them or the opportunities

they present". However, Boatemaa, Drimie and Pereira (2018) observe that many of the shortcomings in food access result from the country's pervasive unemployment. Thus, they also argue that much of the agricultural concerns of the NDP (2012) are, therefore, geared toward cultivating greater employment in the industry through increased commercialisation rather than small-scale food production. However, it is clear that this *modus operandi* subsequently failed, in noting a vast reduction in agricultural employment in the sector since 2000 (von Borman, 2019).

Notwithstanding, it is apparent that the NDP also pays diligence to the position of smallholder farmers (NDP, 2012: 93, 2020). But, as noted by Mabhaudi, Chibarabada, Chimonyo, Murugani, Pereira, Sobratee, Govender, Slotow and Modi (2019), this attention is predominantly placed upon facilitating the smallholder farmers' access to formal value chains by encouraging their partnership with local supermarkets. In concurrence with Boatemaa, Drimie and Pereira (2018), Mabhaudie et al. (2019) argue that the support for small-holder farmers in the NDP (2012) has less to do with reviving peasantry but facilitating greater commercialisation. Indeed, outlined in the NDP (2012: 222), is the pursuit of "long-term sustainable expansion in production and value adding processes. Expansion is not only driven by higher levels of productivity, but also by foreign and domestic demand". Thus, much of this state support facilitates the production of large cash crops based on their appeal to the dominant market (Mabhaudie et al., 2019), rather than a localised and autonomous context of radically transformative food governance aligned with food sovereignty. Therefore, the modalities inherent in the NDP (2012), specifically regarding small-holder farmers, are argued to lack efficacy and cost-effectiveness (Boatemaa, Drimie and Pereira, 2018).

Concerning gender specifically, the NDP aims to promote equal opportunities for women across economic sectors (NDP, 2012: 24). The NDP (2012) also recognises, to some degree, the feminisation of poverty, and its relation to intersectional factors of rurality and race. It states that "security of tenure should be created for communal farmers, especially women"; it is acknowledged that women encounter barriers when attempting to access land for their own farms (NDP, 2012: 204), and, it is acknowledged that in the private agricultural sector, women are likely to earn 25-50% less than men (NDP, 2012: 43). However, despite these observations and intentions, in noting the scholarship identified in part one of this review, the NDP (2012) is yet to be fully realised vis-à-vis the position of rural black African women farmers.

ii. The National Policy on Food and Nutrition Security

Similarly, the National Policy on Food and Nutrition Security (NPFNS), is said to maintain the same *modus operandi* and priorities (Boatema, Drimie and Pereira, 2018). In an attempt to cultivate synergy among numerous and fragmented policies associated with food in the country, the Department of Social Development (DSD) and the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) drafted the NPFNS. The fundamental aim of the NPFNS was “to ensure the availability, accessibility and affordability of safe and nutritious food at national and household levels” (NPFNS, 2014: 6). To achieve this, five pillars were constructed including:

- 1. the enhancement of nutritional safety nets,*
- 2. nutrition education,*
- 3. an increased investment in agriculture,*
- 4. market participation,*
- 5. greater emphasis on food security risk management in response to shifting climate change.*

These pillars, and the policy in general, were formulated upon the recommendations of a report by UN Special Rapporteur (De Schutter, 2012) on the right to food in South Africa.

³ Four key challenges were identified by the Rapporteur which required state attention for effective policy which framed the NPFNS. The first was a need for more “streamlined data collection and analysis” (NPFNS, 2014: 29). It is apparent that further, constant research into the state of the agri-food system is an imperative undertaking for the greater effectiveness of governance. The second referred to “the need to strengthen existing strategies and policies related to food security” (NPFNS, 2014: 29). It was clear, therefore, that there was a marked inadequacy amongst research, policy, and strategies within South Africa’s modes of food governance.

³ In reviewing both the policy and the report it was made clear that much of the NPFNS was strongly aligned with the recommendations of the UN Special Rapporteur (Dr Olivier De Schutter, 2012) on the right to food in South Africa. It is worth noting for greater context and insight that Dr De Schutter is a strong advocate of food sovereignty, agroecology and the potential of small-scale farmers. This is telling in so far as it lends insight into the underpinnings of the NPFNS.

The final two operations advised upon by the UN Special Rapporteur were characterised by the fundamental pillars of food sovereignty and, thus, serve as evidence for the potential validity of food sovereignty in South Africa's governance. The third necessity, according to the UN Special Rapporteur was "improved access to markets for smallholder farmers". However, as noted by Khoza et al. (2019), despite small-hold farming being imperative to buoying livelihoods and food sufficiency, research has shown a significant exclusion of such farmers from engaging fully in the industry. Lastly, the UN Special Rapporteur made the final recommendation of provisioning "greater emphasis on agroecological approaches to farming" (NPFNS, 2014: 29). Increased mechanisation of food production, along with its associated use of genetic modification, has been argued to be detrimental to both society, ecology, and health (Williams, Pelser and Black, 2018), in part, due to the scorched earth praxes of industrial farming, such as over grazing, the country is facing increasing soil degradation and drought (Von Bormann, 2019). The explicit reference to agroecological farming in the NPFNS is, therefore, of pivotal concern given that agroecology is a core element of food sovereignty.

However, it was made clear by Nkwana (2015: 279) that the undertaking is yet to prove successful. Indeed, there is a dearth of evidence to suggest the NPFNS has made profound adjustments to the neoliberal underpinnings which historically and presently compromise the South African food system toward a food sovereignty paradigm. According to McIntyre (2018: 69), the "metanarrative holding this policy together could [still] be food insecurity can be overcome if food production at all levels becomes more competitive". It is clear the fundamentals of food policy in South Africa are still beset upon a technocratic and neoliberal pathway.

Another concern was the issue of disenfranchised women in the agri-food matrix. The NDP and the NPFNS (2014: 5) refer to the need to emphasise "a number of steps that will improve food security...security of land tenure, especially for women". Notwithstanding, most smallholder households in South Africa are women-headed (STATSSA, 2019), while the minority of land holders are women. The insecurity associated with this arrangement has been a recognised threat to the greater success of small hold farming and agroecology in South Africa (Ngcoya and Kumarakulasingam, 2016). It is clear, therefore, that neither the NDP nor the NPFNS (2014) have yet proved successful in this regard.

Moreover, this work takes cognisance of another imperative in the NPFNS (2014), aimed at realising the visions of South Africa's NDP and provide an "overarching guiding framework to maximize synergy between the different strategies and programs of government and civil society". However, aside from a lack of cohesion amongst state actors themselves, Nkwana (2015: 219) also argued for a lack of synergy and inclusion of civil society structures in policy and decision-making processes. Indeed, her findings indicated "no clear guidelines on how the participation of civil society organisations... will be fostered". The sentiments of Hospes and Brons (2016) acknowledge a lack of civil society participation as a profound limitation to the greater efficacy of food system governance. Thus, both the NDP and the NPFNS have been considered non-transformative and maintain strong neoliberal underpinnings associated with the systemic issues entrenched in the socially asymmetric food system.

iii. **Fetsa Tlala Integrated Food Production Initiative**

The Fetsa Tlala Integrated Food Production Initiative (Fetsa Tlala), "is an integrated government framework that seeks to promote food security and address structural causes of food insecurity, which continue to perpetuate inequality and social exclusion" (Fetsa Tlala, 2013: 1). To accomplish this mandate, Fetsa Tlala (2013) put forward several interdepartmental policy responses. These include:

1. *The restructuring of social welfare systems to better reach households effected by malnutrition.*
2. *The expansion of the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP).*
3. *Adopting food fortification and nutrition education by introducing "micro-nutrient sprinkles" which can be added to food.*
4. *Facilitating early childhood development by offering meals to children under four years old.*
5. *Cultivating better food distribution, ensuring a larger and more robust network of food distribution centres.*
6. *Implement a one-million-hectare food production programme, specifically for land reform beneficiaries and within communal land. (Fetsa Tlala, 2013: 2).*

The final policy response reflects a desire to confront the characteristics of the centralised food system, a pursuit central to the legislation and aligned with the NDP and the NPFNS. Fetsa Tlala argues for greater emphasis upon the support of smallholder farmers

particularly, and had aimed to create a total of 590 000 ha of smallholder farming land by 2016 and 1000 000 by 2019 (Fetsa Tlala, 2013: 4). However, the policy also reflected a concerted interest in greater production and commercialisation; focusing on mechanisation and greater state-provided production inputs (Shackleton, Mograbi, Drimie, Fay, Hebink, Hoffman, Maciejewski and Twine, 2019). Cash crops, such as maize and beans were particularly encouraged. Boetemaa, Drimie and Pereira (2018), argued that this aligns with the concurrent theme of national policies regarding agricultural production. However, the Fetsa Tlala strategy of shifting smallholder and subsistence farmers to a highly commercialised medium have been considered “expensive and ineffective” (Boetemaa, Drimie and Pereira, 2018: 271).

Despite the policy referring to the confrontation of systemic, structural underpinnings manifesting food insecurity, it neglects to mention gender discrepancies (van Dijk and Nkwana, 2021). “The fact of the matter is that the policies have been designed without the input of those they intend to affect, namely rural women” (van Dijk and Nkwana, 2021: 107). Moreover, Zwane, Niekerk and Groenewald (2015) find the Fetsa Tlala was theoretically sound, however, the emphasis on inputs led to an abuse of the arrangement. Many able to afford to sustain themselves have exploited the program, demanding greater inputs and thus compromising its success (Zwane, Niekerk and Groenewald, 2015). Therefore, several challenges facing Fetsa Tlala have left concerns regarding its success, and its lack of recognition of gender dynamics, despite women’s centrality to matters of agri-food, is worthy of concern.

2.13. An Overview of Land Governance in South Africa

In response to Apartheid policies such as the Native Land Act (1913), and later the Group Areas Act (1950), current land governance in South Africa is beset upon the three strategies of redistribution, restitution, and reform. These strategies are mandated by the Bill of Rights Section 24 of the constitution (1996), which will be discussed in further detail below. Unfortunately, current land governance has failed in its post-Apartheid goal: the redistribution of 30% of arable land by 2014. However, of the 9% of land transferred, the academy remains sceptical as to the extent to which beneficiaries have been relieved of poverty (Kelly, 2021). Despite white South African’s only accounting for 10% of the population, they owned 90% of the land in 1994 (Chazkel, 2021), and thus land reform was considered integral to rectifying the pervasive racial inequality manifesting in South Africa. The recent Land Audit Report (2017), however, revealed that White South African’s

own 72% of farms and agricultural holdings, while black Africans own an approximate 4%. It is clear policies of reform have failed, notwithstanding the profundity of land ownership and secure tenure as critical to socio-economic emancipation and transformation being widely recognised (Mokombe, 2018; Akinola and Kaseeram, 2021), especially for women (van Dijk and Nkwana, 2021).

Poorly operationalised governance has even, to some extent, exacerbated the land discrepancies in South Africa due to both international and domestic elite land grabbing. Sauti and Lo Thiam (2018) argue that global rushes for greater land acquisition threaten the sovereignty of domestic land and agri-food systems, specifically for countries made vulnerable by maladministration and maladroitness governance. Furthermore, Sauti and Lo Thiam (2018) argue that radical transformations in land redistribution have been met with hostility by domestic farmers, and political advocates of large-scale, industrial farming. Consequently, land reform in ownership and tenure is becoming increasingly precarious and volatile with both domestic and international corporate, elite land grabbing threatening to further the marginalisation of the smallholder farmers. Due to the lack of evidence for these governance arrangements to readily and effectively achieve reform, alternative modalities, policies and strategies are relentlessly contested in academia and public discourse (Kepe and Hall, 2018; Vink and Kirsten, 2019; Akinola and Kaseeram, 2018). Central to this debate is the matter of both neoliberal, market-led policies versus state-led land expropriation, and evidence would suggest much of the policy hitherto has favoured the former (Akinola and Kaseeram, 2018).

Market-led approaches to land reform, in accordance with the neoliberal globalisation of the economic framework in South Africa, are argued by Akinola and Kaseeram (2018) to have in fact exacerbated inequality amongst South Africans. Concurring, Sauti and Lo Thiam (2018: 85) argue for the market-led approach as unable to facilitate transformative land ownership and tenure which remains “crucial for food production, family structure, individual and collective identity and social and economic development.” Moreover, the market-led approach, operating under a neoliberal principle of land distribution, has increased the potential for both elite capture of land resources and increased corporate and domestic elite acquisition of farming land (land-grabbing) (Mtero, Gumede and Ramantsima, 2019). It was noted by Mtero, Gumede and Ramantsima (2019) that despite a considerable paucity of research into the outcomes of land reform, evidence would suggest that “the pro-poor precepts of land reform have increasingly been abandoned in

favour of commercial success” and that “elite capture of public resources in land reform is also on the rise” (Mtero, Gumede and Ramantsima, 2019; in reference to Hall and Kepe, 2017).

Corporate and elite land grabbing is not an issue exclusive to South Africa, and increasing large foreign investment in arable land for increased food production has been widely recognised in several areas around the world (Yang and He, 2021). The practice has been resisted and scrutinised as a form of neo-colonialism and imperialism, threatening the food and land sovereignty of many developing countries (Yang and He, 2021). Thus, land and agri-food governance in the country is yet to adequately confront the challenges of balancing private investment in global markets and land sovereignty and has resulted in a novel form of land grabbing in which many poorer black South Africans are unlawfully occupying land (Sauti and Lo Thiam, 2018). Consequently, further tensions around issues of land ownership result.

Despite little academic acclamation for the transformative potential of the market-led approach to land reform, a state-led alternative is similarly contested (see Lahiff, Borrás and Kay, 2007; Vink and Kirsten, 2019). Converse to the neoliberal policies of present-day land governance, the political left associates itself, largely, with a state-led approach to reform in South Africa. The state-led approach argues for radical land redistribution, including the legal expropriation of land without compensation. However, Vink and Kirsten (2019) have argued that the radical expropriation of land by state has seen little success internationally, and those said to benefit from the method of reform are often further deprived. Evidence suggests that due to bureaucratic incompetency, corruption and maladministration, there is little faith in the literature for state-controlled land reform in South Africa (Vink and Kirsten, 2019). Nevertheless, Mokombe (2018) argues that the *modus operandi* of land reform in South Africa needs to be radically augmented if transformation is to be recognised. Furthermore, when land redistribution does occur, there remains some trepidation around the potential of agricultural projects to prove successful (Vink and Kirsten, 2019). As noted by Vink and Kirsten (2019: 5),

“[for] every community and individual who have had the heritage they lost through discriminatory practices restored, there is a failed farming project or a small farmer... without hope of gaining livelihoods. Sometimes these successes and failures can be seen on the same project.”

Additionally, Kelly (2021) notes that regarding implementation, the consensus amongst scholars would indicate the limitations of land reform programs and, in this regard, misaligned gender access has been identified. It is clear the greatest victims of ineffective land governance are women. According to state reports women possess 13% of farming land and agricultural holdings in South Africa (DRDLF, 'Land Audit Report', 2017). The manner in which women, particularly, are denied greater access to land under current policy is noted in scholarship (Kelly, 2021; Mubeca and Nojiyeza, 2019). Mubeca and Nojiyeza (2019) argue that various policies, including the Settlement and Land Acquisition Grant (SLAG), and the Land Redistribution for Agricultural Development project (LRAD), which will be discussed below, have all proved unsuccessful in ensuring equitable land ownership for women in South Africa.

Furthermore, the policies and praxes of customary governance in South Africa have historically marginalised rural women from land ownership (Rangan and Gilamartin, 2002), and Khuzwayo's (2018) sentiments, would indicate that misaligned national and provincial policy has done little to rectify the situation. Mubeca and Nojiyeza (2019), reflect the dissonance characterising the relationship between state and traditional authority surrounding land governance, and argue that the latter has compromised policy efficacy in enhancing land tenure among women. Little evidence would suggest that alternative, state-led approaches of expropriation without compensation would manifest greater results (Mubeca and Nojiyeza, 2019). Therefore, both market-led and state-led approaches to land distribution have been treated with scepticism; policy is yet to consolidate an effective strategy for the tangible enfranchisement of historically marginalised rural demographics, particularly women.

2.14. Land Parent Policies

Land policy and associated literature is extensive in South Africa. Thus, three major national governance arrangements were selected, acting as exemplars, and reflecting the temporal shifts in legislature and underpinning ideologies from 1997 to 2020.

i. White Paper on South African Land Policy (1997)

The White Paper on South African Land Policy was finalised in 1997 by the Department of Land Affairs (DLA), aligning with the Constitution and RDP. This seminal policy aimed to directly address:

1. *The injustices of racially based land dispossession,*
2. *the inequitable distribution of land ownership,*
3. *the need for security of tenure for all,*
4. *the need for sustainable use of land,*
5. *the need for rapid release of land for development,*
6. *the need to record and register all rights in property and,*
7. *the need to administer public land in an effective manner* (White paper on South African land policy, 1997).

This was to be achieved via three channels: (1) Land restitution, referring to the returning of land, or providing compensation to those who had been removed as a result of discriminatory policy. (2) Land redistribution, allowing marginalised South Africans the ability to purchase land with the assistance of a settlement/acquisition grant. (3) Land reform, concerns secure landholding through resolving disputes and provisioning alternate tenure security for displaced persons (White Paper on South African Land Policy, 1997).

The White Paper on South African Land Policy (1997) made clear the government's neoliberal angle to land reform by mandating a market-led approach under the willing-seller, willing-buyer principle. Consequently, the directorate was to provision financial resources to beneficiaries rather than having the state owning the land outright (Kloppers and Pienaar, 2014). The policy took a moderate stance on reform to maintain market confidence in land and agriculture. However, Malatji (2019) notes the willing-seller, willing buyer principle, to a greater extent, failed. Farmers were often unwilling to sell unless the land was somewhat unfarmable, or the purchase price was heavily increased. Corresponding subsidies through programs like the Settlement Land Acquisition Grant (SLAG) were therefore unable to see much progress for the previously disadvantaged landless. It is accepted that the White Paper on South African Land Policy was unable to adequately confront the historic racialised asymmetries in land ownership and tenure in the country (Malatji, 2019; Kloppers and Pienaar, 2014).

ii. Proactive Land Acquisition Strategy

The Proactive Land Acquisition Strategy (PLAS) was officially approved in 2003 and saw a profound shift in the state approach to land governance when a previously beneficiary-driven system was replaced with a state-driven approach to land acquisition (PLAS

Implementation Plan, 2006). In short, this strategy allows state to actively identify, procure land and match it with specific demands for land (PLAS Implementation Plan, 2006: 4). According to PLAS, the reasons for this alternative modality are to;

1. *accelerate the land redistribution process,*
2. *ensure that the DLA can acquire the land in areas of high agricultural potential,*
3. *improve the identification and selection of beneficiaries and the planning of land on which people would be settled and,*
4. *ensure the maximum productive use of land acquired.*

(PLAS Implementation Plan, 2006: 4).

This shift in modus operandi enables the government to purchase land without having targeted a beneficiary. The state may purchase land and, thereafter, select a beneficiary who is provided with a lease agreement. Therefore, farmers are required to produce sufficient output to afford to continue (Malatji, 2019). However, PLAS has seen some critique, and Kepe and Hall (2018) argue that the adopted policy is a diversion from the aspirations of socio-economic justice which a beneficiary-led approach cultivated. Rather, it reverts to the colonial underpinnings associated with hegemonic land control (Kepe and Hall, 2018). Malatji (2019) argues that PLAS has, to some extent, failed as a result of insufficient support from state following beneficiary access to land. Training and support are the responsibility of extension officers, of which there is a lack, and many of whom are said to be incompetent (Malatji, 2019).

The lion's share of PLAS beneficiaries does not produce adequate output and some do not produce at all (Malatji, 2019). Consequently, previously disadvantaged South African's have seen little by way of fulfilling the promises of justice through land reform. Strategies like PLAS are argued to maintain the status quo, affording control over the means of production to domestic and international capital, both white and black elites, and traditional authorities (Kepe and Hall, 2018), thus, have failed to support marginalised black African farmers (Malatji, 2019).

iii. National Policy for Beneficiary Selection and Land Allocation

To address the alternative side of PLAS, the state recently introduced the National Policy for Beneficiary Selection and Land Allocation (BSLA) in 2020. The objectives of BSLA are numerous. Inter alia, aims were to:

- 1. provide a uniform, fair, credible, and transparent process and criteria for selection of beneficiaries for land allocation or leasing of State properties.*
- 2. To rekindle the class of Black commercial producers who were destroyed by the 1913 Land Act.*
- 3. To address diverse or different land needs - agricultural production, human settlements, commonage, and residential and industrial development purposes.*
- 4. To promote industrialization, changes in spatial development, support for township economies, and the creation of special economic zones and industries in rural areas through access to land.*
- 5. To ensure special and targeted groups of land reform beneficiaries (youth, women, people living with disabilities, producers on communal land and military veterans) gain access to land for production purposes. (BSLA, 2020: 14).*

BSLA (2020) pays due diligence to beneficiaries hitherto overlooked by policy implementations, especially women who are, under BSLA, now given priority. Eligible women with farming skills or even a willingness to learn to farm, and female headed households with little land available will be provided with land. Unfortunately, Ramantsima (2020), argues that similar criteria have been considered before and statistics would indicate that little progress was made for women in that regard. Moreover, Ramantsima (2020) cogently acknowledged that 'women' are not a monolith, and the policy lacks the ability to make discrepancy according to class and race, potentially compromising efficacy. It is clear the BSLA (2020) maintains good intentions, however, its recent advent makes a thorough review of its efficacy difficult. Thus, further monitoring and evaluation is required concerning gendered shifts towards a just food system to garner the full extent to which BSLA (2020) has proved effective.

2.15. Land, Food Sovereignty and a Proposed People's Food Sovereignty Act

This section aims to locate the food sovereignty governance response and its contrast to current land and agri-food governance in South Africa. The Proposed People's Food Sovereignty Act (Food Sovereignty Act, 2018) was drafted by the South African Food Sovereignty Campaign (SAFSC) and, therefore, illustrates the realpolitik associated with engendering a food sovereignty alternative in the South African context. However, it must be noted that the act manifests an illustrative tool for advocacy, and has not been incorporated in formal governance in the country. The Food Sovereignty Act (2018) is founded in a call for,

“the deep transition of our food system by breaking the control of food corporations and repositioning the state to realise the constitutional right to food, and ensure the creation of conditions and space for the emergence of food sovereignty alternatives from below” (Food Sovereignty Act, 2018: 2).

The act takes a broad approach by placing its attention across a range of issues. Several examples of diversion from presently implemented state policy are identifiable. Inter alia, the act makes no particular provision for women, or historically disadvantaged South Africans, which remains at the centre of land and agri-food policy in the country. No caveat or legislative mechanism seeks to address the profundity of a perennially racialised and patriarchal food system beyond a brief non-discrimination clause.

The act diverts from the aspirations of both the NDP and the NPFNS in so far as it aims to cultivate producer-lead community markets and further constrain the dominance of corporate-centred markets. Much policy hitherto has attempted to facilitate the inclusion of small-scale produce into the dominant value chain; evident in strategies and a particular emphasis on the growth of cash crops apparent in the NDP. However, it is clear that the Food Sovereignty Act (2018) maintains a strong aversion to corporatized food system governance: manufactured and monopolised seed and agricultural inputs are to be heavily regulated, as is the centralisation of land, and the privatisation of water is outlawed. At the point of sale on consumption, the act regulates the marketing, import and consumption of junk food and the import, marketing and consumption of genetically modified (GM) produce is made illegal.

The author argues that some of these regulations are potentially incongruent with the act's aim of a “democratic planning of the food system” (Food Sovereignty Act: 4). This is most evident in land governance, wherein farm size and production methods are strictly regulated. As noted by Borras, Franco and Suárez (2015), that in the food sovereignty debate, land and food systems are inextricable, and democratic access to land is arguably central its success. Rosset (2009: 116) further suggests that “to achieve genuine food sovereignty, people in rural areas must have access to productive land”, to halt corporate agri-business from undercutting small-scale farmers. Despite Agarwal (2014) arguing for food sovereignty maintaining a relatively unclear stance on land reform, particularly the promulgated collective land ownership modality, the act takes a radical approach:

1. *All persons have a right to claim and use land to advance food sovereignty, particularly land which is not being used for a social and environmental function, and*
2. *all small-scale farmers are entitled to a piece of land with the minimum size being one hectare and maximum of two hectares* (Food Sovereignty Act, 2018: 13).

This aligns with the international food sovereignty policy International Conference on Agrarian Land Reform and Rural Development (Paper 5: 2006). At its core, market-based approaches to land reform are largely shunned by food sovereignty advocates and food sovereignty argues for “government expropriation of idle land, with or without compensation for former owners” (ICCALRRD, Paper 5, 2006: 24). However, both the Food Sovereignty Act and the ICCALRRD fail to appreciate present land tensions thoroughly, especially in the historical and present context of South Africa. For example, given the novel form of land grabbing by landless people in South Africa described by Sauti and Lo Thiam (2018), this policy may prove to exacerbate the illegal occupation of idle land for housing, contributing to further geopolitical tensions around land.

This could potentially compromise smallholders and the pursuit of food sovereignty. Dekeyser, Korsten and Firamonti (2018) argued that collective rights over land can cultivate dissonance between farmers who have had previous tenure and the landless, and such elements are yet to be clarified cogently in food sovereignty action or scholarly debate. However, like Borras, Franco and Suárez (2015), Ferrando (2021) argued that if food sovereignty is to work, it must think beyond mere access to land, or the right to reclaim land or have security of tenure. Rather, he argues for a holistic interpretation of the food system, in which it requires regulatory measures that confront the monopolisation of the food chain which concentrated land ownership facilitates (Ferrando, 2021). Thus, many in food sovereignty see “land reforms and redistribution as essential but insufficient steps towards a food regime that is based on rights, democracy, ecology and justice” (Ferrando, 2021: 4), and therefore manifest but a part of the food sovereignty agenda.

Satgar and Cherry (2019: 11) put it cogently, “while land justice is a crucial part of food sovereignty struggles, this is not about securing land to reproduce the existing system. Rather it is about locating land and wider food struggles in the struggle for an alternative food system”. It is clear in both matters of land and agri-food governance, that the food sovereignty response, manifested in scholarship, international policy and the South African Peoples’ Food Sovereignty Act is a radical outline for alternative governance.

However, it is apparent that food sovereignty scholars and advocates are yet to find congruence amongst themselves. Thus, further consideration is required to ensure the contextual soundness of applying a food sovereignty paradigm to South Africa's precarious land matters in agrarian milieus.

2.16. Conclusion

It is clear from the review of land and agri-food governance arrangements, and relevant scholarship, that current neoliberal modalities have, to a greater extent, proven unsuccessful. Consequently, the injustices of the food systems are maintained, ensuring the racial and patriarchal factors continue to subjugate rural black African women farmers. Despite the efforts of decision-makers, a plethora of evidence recommended a shift from the neoliberal paradigm, away from commodification and commercialisation, in favour of local food systems autonomy. Reflection upon the Food Sovereignty Act, and relevant literature, shows the potential for food sovereignty advocacy to manifest such a shift including a potential redress of land governance. However, a lack of uniformity, a lack of greater contextual soundness, and somewhat incongruent parameters of food sovereignty, especially in the question of land governance, demands greater consideration.

Chapter Three: Theoretical Framework

Part One: Epistemic and Theoretical Positions

3.1. Introduction

Part One of Chapter Three illustrates epistemic positions of this research and the theoretical frameworks responsible for its scaffolding. Reasons for the food sovereignty paradigm not being among these frameworks are noted: having illustrated the transformative ideologies and praxes of food sovereignty in the previous chapter, further reflection would risk repetition. Secondly, literature makes apparent the food sovereignty paradigm's lack of epistemological uniformity (Dekeyser, Korsten and Fioramonti, 2018; Edelman, 2014). This theoretical incongruence was particularly clear vis-à-vis the concept's feminist interconnection (Park, White and Julia, 2015; Bezner Kerr et al., 2019; Agarwal, 2014). Thus, the author argues that a feminist food sovereignty is yet to fully realise the degree of theoretical development in academic consensus to warrant its inclusion in this chapter. Instead, this researcher was required to adopt grounded theory to formulate and bolster the cogency of a potential feminist food sovereignty framework. There are several epistemological and methodological interpretations of grounded theory. Thus, the chapter illustrates critical realist grounded theory as both this research's overarching paradigm, and methodological approach.

Oliver (2011: 12) acknowledges that critical realist grounded theorists are required to contextualise "action within broader social structures and meanings", accounting for socio-economic, political, environmental, gendered and racial intersections in a given milieu. In this regard, analysis of power dynamics, hegemonic control, and the manner in which power manifests, is also required within the frame of such a study. Therefore, to position this research in terms of various actions of power, neo-Marxian theory will be adopted. In this undertaking, particular emphasis is placed upon concepts of agrarian Marxism, metabolic rift, and Bernstein's food regime theory. Finally, part one of this chapter three will reflect the various feminist theories which will enable this research to provide cogency within a food sovereignty analytic and contextualise women's inter and intra-household role in the food system. Due to the concomitant concerns of race, gender and class which characterise this role, it pays predominant consideration to the intersectional feminist theories of bell hooks.

3.2. Critical Realism

Critical realism manifests the epistemic underpinning of this research. The concept, developed in the 1970s, both concurs and diverts from traditional positivism and postmodern interpretivism (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014). Indeed, critical realism posits an objective reality which manifests regardless of individual consciousness, but, maintains that interpretation of this reality is subjective according to the beliefs, social dynamics, and context in which knowledge is manifested (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014; Oliver, 2011). Thus, critical realism promulgates the understanding of consciousness-dependence, inclusive of both researcher and participant, by arguing that structures manifest independently of human agents. Thus, the understanding and experience of reality is the production of social and cultural scaffolding (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014).

Oliver (2011) notes the critical realist acknowledges that eradicating all perspectivism from research is unattainable. In mitigation, the epistemic aspirations of critical realism concern '*multi-faceted*' reality; dictated by a wide range of both overt and covert phenomena influencing social structures and dynamics (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014: 33). Although this strikes close to an interpretivist paradigm, critical realism differs in so far as it maintains particular emphasis on emancipation, humanism and societal justice (Oliver, 2011; du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014). For the critical realist, therefore, the researcher's responsibility is to cultivate positive societal change and confront unjust social constructions. Due to this work's particular emphasis on justice, the empowerment of agrarian women, the right to food, confronting a socio-ecologically exploitative food system and associated governance arrangements, a critical realist underpinning is both appropriate and complimentary.

3.3. Critical Realist Grounded Theory: A Straussian Adoption

During the formulation of this research topic, grounded theory did not emerge as a necessary theoretical framework or mode of analysis. However, a literature review reflected the epistemic discrepancies associated with a food sovereignty paradigm (Dekeyser, Korsten and Fioramonti, 2018; Edelman, 2014), and especially concerning the incongruent feminist conceptualisation within that paradigm (Bezner Kerr et al., 2019; Agarwal, 2014). It became clearer, therefore, that to rectify this shortcoming, a certain degree of inductive research for theory building was paramount which ratified the use of grounded theory.

Grounded theory manifested a diversion from the deductive research methodologies which monopolised the humanities during the 1900s (Oliver, 2011). Rather, its initial promulgators, Glaser and Strauss, developed an epistemic and methodological framework which dictates data collection, coding and analysis to extract novel conceptual insights into phenomena under study (Charmaz and Thornberg, 2021). The modality has several valid applications including: the exploration of novel phenomena; the development, and understanding of concepts or processes; shedding light upon the insights of otherwise voiceless populations; and enhancing policies, and best practices (Charmaz and Thornberg, 2021). Thus, grounded theory shares several uses aligned with the objectives of this research in its critical realist underpinning by centring the agrarian woman in decision-making and governance.

The pragmatic strategies of grounded theory analysis will be discussed in the following, Chapter Four. However, in short, grounded theory provides an iterative process of reading, transcribing, coding and drawing thematic conclusions from the data (Strydom and Bezuidenhout, 2014). Notwithstanding, the manner in which grounded theory is operationalised and conceptualised has fragmented and multiple variations of grounded theory are now available (Devadas, Silong and Ismail, 2011). The two strands of grounded theory are what Mills, Bonner and Francis (2006) refer to as the traditional and evolved schools, referring to the adaptations of Glaserian and Straussian perspectives respectively. The chapter illustrates both these perspectives, and argues why this research is best served by Straussian grounded theory, amalgamated with critical realism.

In epistemic terms, Glaserian grounded theory aligns more with a positivist objective, pursuing “generalisable theory about an objective reality through the systematic application of method by a neutral observer” (Oliver, 2011: 7). Consequently, Glaserian thought argued that presumptive knowledge of frameworks and literature pertaining to the phenomena under analysis inhibits both the inductive process and the neutrality of the researcher (Thai, Chong and Agrawal, 2012). As such, the approach discourages formulated research questions prior to the emergence of problems of interest within the data itself. Noting that the researcher had prior knowledge of the topic, had formulated research questions and written a literature review, clearly a Glaserian model of grounded theory was unsuitable.

Conversely, in selecting an alternative *modus operandi*, Straussian grounded theory posed no such challenges. Although sharing a similar element of realism with the Glaserian interpretation, Straussian grounded theory differs in so much as it maintains a discernible element of constructivist collaboration within research (Mills, Bonner and Francis, 2006). According to Oliver (2011: 8), a critical realist grounded theory would “draw from the hermeneutical bent and fluidity” of a more constructivist interpretation. Straussian grounded theory, in its flexibility concerning the research, thus became a viable option for this work and its critical realist underpinnings.

3.4. Critical Realist Grounded Theory and Heterodox Economics

There are several ways in which critical realism, grounded theory and the Marxian heterodox economics illustrated below, interweave and complement one another for a formidable theoretical framework. As Lee (2012) argues, heterodox economists operate under common sense understandings which indicate the researcher’s belief in the objective reality of phenomena. Inter alia, a heterodox economist acknowledges the variety and complexity of interconnected yet individual contexts in which an economic system (in this case the food system) functions. However, it accounts for its independent existence from human action (Lee, 2012). Similarly, the critical realist analysis considers a vast complexity of interwoven causalities (Oliver, 2012), which dictate the dynamics within social structures. As noted by Lee (2012: 8), these “heterodox economists conclude that the economy works in terms of causal-historical process... because they accept the ontological constraint implicit in this... critical realism is the ontological basis of heterodox economics”. Thus, the interconnection between critical realism and heterodox economics is noted in academia and provides a rigorous, and mutually complimentary theoretical framework.

However, this conceptual partnership requires a complimentary methodology. It is clear that, ontologically, critical realism is well attuned to the work of heterodox economists, but grounded theory further compliments this triangulation by offering a necessary methodological uniformity. Although critical realism provides a robust scaffold for such research, it is devoid of a consistent research method, thus, compromising its expansion as a paradigm (Oliver, 2011). However, grounded theory is universally respected as a sound and conceptually and pragmatically unified mode of qualitative enquiry (Oliver, 2011). Additionally, it is methodology which has consistently concerned itself with contextualisation of particular social behaviour in relation to wider social constructions

(Oliver, 2011). The actions and emancipation of women in the broader system according to a heterodox economic lens like food sovereignty, and agrarian Marxism, the emancipatory aspirations of critical realism, and the complimentary methodology of grounded theory, all culminate in the theoretical basis for this research.

3.5. An Overview of Agrarian Marxism

The applicability of an amalgamated critical realism, grounded theory and heterodox economic theory has been recognised (Lee, 2012). Both critical realism and grounded theory align with a Marxian interpretation in so much as they lend themselves to research based on action and objectives for societal change. In noting this research as being concerned with the heterodox political economic movements of food sovereignty, and a diversion from large, capitalist agriculture, the neo-Marxist analysis offers a foundational component to further the understanding of food sovereignty and the food system. However, a problematic was recognised in the use of classical Marxian theory. Marx's (1852) original writings on the transformative potential of smallholders was disparaging:

“In so far as there is merely a local interconnection among these small-holding peasants, and the identity of their interests forms no community, no national bond, and no political organization among them, they do not constitute a class. They are therefore incapable of asserting their class interest in their own name... They cannot represent themselves, they must be represented... The political influence of the small-holding peasants, therefore, finds its final expression in the executive power which subordinates society to itself” (Marx, 1852: 62).

In noting food sovereignty as a movement of global transformative potential, and the wide political influence of organisations like LVC, it is clear that Marx's (1852) interpretation requires rethinking. Hence, Agrarian Marxism is a neo-Marxist insight which is gaining traction in academia and scholarship extracts itself from the idea of small-scale farmers lacking in agency (Levien, Watts and Hairong, 2018). Instead, more work involving land grabbing, reform, and food sovereignty, are adopting agrarian neo-Marxist frameworks (Levien, Watts and Hairong, 2018). To its core, this subsect of Marxist theory attempts to explain three interconnected questions, including: the way in capitalism appropriates means of production and facilitates discrepancies between agrarian classes; the role of agriculture in affecting the capitalist mode of production; and, the political outcomes for

agrarian classes resultant from this mode of production (Levien, Watts and Hairong, 2018). Marxian thought is largely concerned with illustrating the role of capital, class and state in defining society by arguing that social conflict is the fundamental result of class discrepancy (Niezen, 2004). Thus, both regarding interpretations of political economy, and its appreciation of the potential of smallholders as a class, agrarian Marxism undergirds this research.

The thought manifests a response to the traditionally liberal interpretations of social scientists and social historians in South Africa, whose scholarship has primarily observed societal conflict and inequality as the product of racial dissonance. The Marxian interpretation of the country's society, however, argue that intersectional elements, albethey driven fundamentally by class, dictate the social structures of South Africa. And, are upheld by unjust legislature and intervention by a state subservient to hegemonic capital (Kantor and Kenny, 2007). Indeed, little transformation in the food system took place following the shift to a predominantly black-regulated political economy in 1994. Notwithstanding the aims of the African National Congress (ANC), it is clear that the dualistic nature of agri-food in South Africa persist (Kirsten, 2017). A small number (40 000) of highly commercial, industrial, predominantly white-owned, capitalist farms monopolise food output (Kirsten, 2017), and land holding. These domestic fractions of capital, and the neoliberal land and agri-food policies which consolidate them, potentially alienate and marginalise the two million smallholders and household farms in South Africa. Therefore, agrarian Marxian thought is argued to be invaluable in understanding the injustice associated with the food system.

3.6. Agrarian Marxism: Food Regime Theory

Food Regime Theory aims to explain, “how systems for the production, distribution, and consumption of food are integrated in a manner that reflects and supports global cycles of capital accumulation” (Brown, 2019: 1). Bernstein (2016) posits that food regime theory views system arrangements as products of global capitalism, specifically in so far as their development relates to the historic diminishment of smallholding peasantries. Furthermore, earliest food regimes, manifested through the industrial and imperialist forces of colonisation, consequently disenfranchised small-scale farmers through acts of subversion (Bernstein, 2016).

Evidence suggests the colonial suppression of peasantries continues to manifest in the land and agri-food matrix in South Africa today, and governance is yet to adequately address this phenomenon. Sauti and Lo Thiam (2018: 85) argue that previously colonised South Africans “have long been deprived of land through the land-grabbing practises of colonial-era settlers and foreign interests [and] government land-redistribution efforts either remain stagnant or occur too slowly”. Food regime theory resonates with this historical coloniality and imperialism described by Bernstein (2016), and offers a valuable illustration of the temporal causalities which affect the present food system.

Capitalist food regimes have arguably solidified the predominance of the global market over previously food sovereign states through policy and economic pressure. As noted by Termeer et al. (2018) and Kirsten (2017), much of the systemic issues facing South African agri-food systems are a consequence of neoliberal, global agri-food deregulation in the 1980s. Similarly, Sauti and Lo Thiam (2018) argued for the global food-price crises of 2008 as responsible for greater foreign investment by corporate elites, and also subsequent land grabbing, which threatens food sovereignty amongst countries of the Global South. On this basis, food regime theory, as underpinned by agrarian Marxism, offers an appropriate lens through which the above phenomena and their consequences are explained through a view of global, systemic capitalist processes, and enables comprehension of the South African food system in the greater temporal, and geo-political context of capitalist progression.

3.7. Agrarian Marxism: Metabolic Rift

The expansion of this industrial agricultural capitalist modality has engendered what Marx referred to as the concept of metabolic rift (Foster, 1999). It is a concept which has already entered into food sovereignty and agroecology discourse by Bezner Kerr et al. (2019: 3) and Garcia-Sempere et al. (2018) and is defined by the former as “a set of relational ecological and social processes, disrupting material, epistemic and social pathways”. This research uses the concept of metabolic rift to show how capitalist action, and the complicit role of state, increased the alienation of smallholder farmers from their land, thus encouraging male migration and, thereby, cementing women’s position in the agrarian milieu.

As Marx (1894: 588) himself observed, “large landed property reduces the agricultural population to a constantly falling minimum, and confronts it with a constantly growing

industrial population crowded together in large cities”. Moreover, this interpretation in the South African context argues that it has historically manifested consistent supplies of cheap labour, acknowledging that capitalists were given the potential to pay workers less, arguing that they were able to sustain themselves with the help of smallholdings (Kantor and Kenny, 2007). As Camlin, Snow and Hosegood (2014: 529) note,

“male temporary labour migration was a cornerstone of South Africa’s segregationist economy. ‘Influx control’ legislation, that is, urban residency and land ownership restrictions on the black population, and Apartheid policies governing the residence and movement of black South Africans sought, among other things, to prevent women from migrating from rural areas.”

Thus, as Kantor and Kenny (2007) also illustrate, the neo-Marxist argument remains that migration, and specifically urban and rural planning policies, were historically designed in favour of the hegemonic fracture of capital. Therefore, if the suggestions of Ngcoya and Kumarakulasingam (2016) are correct, the effect of male migration, resulting from this capitalist *modus operandi*, has resulted in the feminisation of agriculture. It is a position that perpetuates the unpaid and invisible labour of black African small-hold farming women for the benefit of social reproduction and, thus, their continued disenfranchisement in the current mode of production. This brings this research to feminist theory to understand this position of women on a deeper and more sound theoretical level.

3.8. Feminist Theory

The above theories provide the research with explanation for the current food system and explicate how women’s central position in that system is manifested. However, it provides no further detail or specificity regarding the plight of women at an institutional, inter, or intra-household level. Thus, this work turns to feminist theory to better understand what this position entails and how gendered experiences may be better understood. As noted by Agarwal (2014), food sovereignty’s ability to reconcile its support for both family farming, associated with patriarchal practises, and feminism is unclear. Thus, in extending the concept of a feminist food sovereignty, a thorough illustration of feminist theory is paramount for the empowerment of marginalised women smallholders.

Despite increasing centrality of women in matters of social development, academia and governance, the extent to which the core essence of this earlier feminist thought has been

reflected is brought into question (Cornwall, Gideon and Wilson, 2008). As Cornwall, Gideon and Wilson (2008: 2) posit, “women are no longer on the side-lines, or ignored altogether. And yet when we take a closer look at the way in which women come to be represented, it becomes evident that what appears may be far from what feminists might have desired”. Much debate continues in gender and feminist discourses and there is some trepidation as to whether feminism, and its original aspirations of empowerment have been diluted, co-opted and appropriated in scholarship, development practise, media, and governance, contrary to the essence of revolutionary feminist thought. Feminist thought is diverse, and differing interpretations of feminism are expansive. Thus, this work aligns itself with the insights of the seminal works of bell hooks, noting that her particular impetus on intersectional oppression, according to race, class and gender, is invaluable to this research.

3.9. The ‘Big Three’: Liberal, Radical and Marxist Feminism

hooks (2000a: 1) considers feminism “a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression”. At its core, feminism is a mechanism for human emancipation, for both men and women, from a system of patriarchal control over social configurations. However, with the incipience of second wave feminism movement, it was clear that three fundamentally different conceptualisations of feminism, and the theoretical future of feminism, had arisen. These ‘Big Three’, refer to liberal feminism, Marxist feminism and radical feminism (Maynard, 1995).

Liberal feminism, or mainstream feminism, argues for gender discrepancies as being the product of socialisation rather than inherent patriarchy within social structures (Thompson, 2016). Thus, liberal feminists maintain an element of faith in these social structures, manifested by political or legal institutions, to cultivate equality amongst genders. In taking this approach, it is clear liberal feminism does not aspire for revolutionary action, rather attempting to augment structures through legislation, regulation and policy, for the benefit of women (Thompson, 2016). Liberal feminism is openly critiqued for neglecting to imbricate intersectional oppression of class and race within its conceptualisation, and thus, remains a less suitable framework in understanding the particular disenfranchisement experienced by black African, small-hold farming women in Southern Africa.

Conversely, radical feminism emerges as less moderate mechanism by which novel gender relations may emerge (Maynard, 1995). The radical feminist views men, and inherent difference in masculinity, as the primary cause of women's oppression and subjugation (Gbaguidi and Allagbe, 2018). In this regard, when radical feminists take up a revolutionary agenda, "not only do they crush anybody who serves as the cause of/for their oppressions but they also hold men and patriarchal social structure of their society or societies as responsible for their being violent and violating social norms" (Gbaguidi and Allagbe, 2018: 44). Although it is clear that radical feminism engenders revolutionary action, it arguably pays insufficient theoretical attention to intersectionality, invalidating its adoption in any extensive manner in this research.

Maynard (1995) posits that polarisation often occurs between Marxist feminism and radical feminism in so far as Marxist-feminist understanding argues that gender inequality as being inherently perpetuated by the capitalist mode of production. Ferguson, Hennessy and Mechthild (2004), reflect the Marxist-feminist analysis belief that men's monopoly over private ownership has mutated the familial relationship. That, hegemonic ownership by males has cultivated women's dependence on male family members, entrenching a division of labour in which women are responsible for unpaid household work (Ferguson Hennessy, and Mechthild, 2004), that sustains the present mode of production. Therefore, Marxist-feminism offered a reasonable interconnection to matters of class and gender linkages, specifically, concerning the gendered division of labour.

The gendered division of labour sees women disproportionately responsible for household labour and childcare, according to the social norms associated with respective sexes (Garcia and Tomlinson, 2021). This remains an inherent characteristic across the capitalist super-structure (Armstrong, 2020), and, therefore justice cannot be accomplished under the present mode of production. It must be noted, that vis-à-vis unpaid household labour, the plight of agrarian women is particularly exacerbated. Furthermore, over child care and domestic responsibilities, these women are also endowed with the responsibility of agricultural production, and subsequently vulnerable to further exploitation.

Unfortunately, food sovereignty discourse is yet to fully explain its theoretical contradictions in resolving this exploitation (Dekeyser, Korsten and Fioramonti, 2018), with Agarwal (2014) positing that "strengthening family farming and achieving gender equality" is potentially contradictory. Family farming, according to Andrew, Smith and Morena

(2019), cultivates the invisible, and unpaid labour of women in the agrarian context. It is appropriate, therefore, that in keeping with the foci of this research, Marxist-feminist interpretation of these phenomena, and the effect they have on intra and inter-household gender justice, are applicable and valuable. Although Marxist-feminism aligns with the heterodox political economic critiques associated with this research, and has influenced this work, it does not pay due consideration of intersectional oppression, and especially race, required for effective theory building in the context of black African farming women.

3.10. Advocating hooks' Feminism and Intersectionality

Hooks, however, recognised these discrepancies in conceptualising feminism, positing that although women seek equality with men there is no stipulation as to which men women seek to be equal to (hooks, 1984 in Biana, 2020). In doing so, hooks (1984; 2000b) exposed the lacking recognition of aspects of race and class in the aspirations and conceptualisations of feminist thought. As noted by hooks (2000a: 5), “even before race became a talked about issue in feminist circles it was clear to black women (and their revolutionary allies in struggle) that they were never going to have equality within the existing white supremacist capitalist patriarchy”. Hooks’ (2000a) reference to the ‘*white supremacist capitalist patriarchy*’ offers an all-encompassing recognition of several social configurations which exacerbate the unjust plight of poorer, black women.

Thus, this research turned to the work of bell hooks (2000a; 2000b), who’s constant and erudite feminist theories offer greater insight into the core feminist aspiration and an appropriate consideration of intersectionality. According to Weldon (2008), intersectionality provides a theoretical framework for observing the interconnection of class, race and gender in manifesting oppressive social dynamics. For hooks, these social dynamics meant the need to centralise the voice of black women in feminist theory and feminist politic. It was disconcerting to hooks (2000b), in her work ‘Feminist Theory: From Margin to Centre’, that historically feminist thought has neglected to acknowledge the role of race and racism in the oppression of women.

Rather, liberal feminism, according to hooks (2000b), had focused on the emancipation of middle-class, white women, and, thus, “racism abounds the writings of white feminists, reinforcing white supremacy and negating the possibility that women will bond politically across ethnic and racial boundaries” (2000b: 3). Indeed, hooks (2000b) argued that prejudiced feminist literature attempted to “show that white girls are somehow more

vulnerable to sexist conditioning than girls of colour...simply perpetuates the white supremacist assumption that white females require more attention to their concerns". It was made clear that to theorise gender, sexism, or patriarchy in this research, its feminist underpinnings demanded an intersectional approach, or otherwise risk engendering further injustice.

However, it must be made apparent that the majority of hooks' work centred around the particular plight of black American women. This context discrepancy was, at first, concerning, and the researcher considered the extent to which hooks' theoretical understandings would be applicable in a South African milieu. However, further reading indicated that hooks had paid due consideration to the concept of border-crossing, expanding her thought to the struggle of black women both in the developed and developing world (Biana, 2020). Given South Africa's particularly white supremacist configurations, hooks' work did imply an element of cross-border thinking, providing its valuable applicability on race and its intersection with gender in the South African context.

Furthermore, hooks' (2000b) considers the manner in which socio-economic status, class, was cultivated through exercising white supremacy, and what effect this class discrepancy has on the lives of black women particularly. It became apparent in hooks' work that, to some extent, issues of economic inequality superseded that of gender and race. Earlier feminist theory, in its focus upon educated, middle-class white women, emphasised the pursuit of equal opportunity and employment (hooks, 2000b). However, a white supremacist capitalist fear, was "that white power would diminish if non-white people gained equal access to economic power and privilege" (hooks, 2000b: 41), hence implying that white women of particular class were given precedent over a black male, for example.

Consequently, hooks was able to argue for the voice of the black women as central in feminist thought in so far as particular cognisance should be taken of their struggle against not just white supremacist patriarchy, but white supremacist patriarchy in the context of a capitalist mode of production. Therefore, given the increasing feminisation of poverty in South Africa, hooks' thoughts are invaluable, and more so considering this research's heterodox economic underpinnings which confront this capitalist mode of production.

Thus, the link between capitalism (class hegemony), race (white supremacy), and, their interconnection with gender (patriarchy) was of paramount concern in hooks' feminist conceptualisation of the *white supremacist capitalist patriarchy*. Her work continues to

influence feminist thought and provides an appropriate framework in this research's undertaking. In this regard, hooks' analysis of intersectionality of various overlapping social constructions provides a holistic and in-depth consideration of the intrahousehold, and wider political and economic struggles of women, with specific consideration of impoverished black women.

3.11. Conclusion

Part one of this chapter illustrated the meta-theory and theory with which this work seeks to engage, and contribute toward. Critical realism was shown to be an appropriate paradigm from which food sovereignty and the food system may be considered. Critical realist grounded theory proved to be viable mechanism by which the concept of food sovereignty may be bolstered. Agrarian Marxism also underpins this research in so much as it provides a critique of the food system that remains congruent with the heterodox economic underpinnings of food sovereignty. Lastly, feminist theory was discussed. Due to a lack of intersectional theorising within the 'big three' feminist frameworks (liberal, radical and Marxist), this work turned to the seminal work of bell hooks to assist in an appropriate feminist construction of food sovereignty. The theories of bell hooks showed constant consideration for the intersectional aspects of race, class and gender, and given South Africa's injustice on bases of race, class and gender, hooks' conceptualisation engenders suitable feminist insight.

Chapter Three: Theoretical Framework

Part Two: Systems and Governance

3.12. Introduction

Part two of this chapter concerns itself with the conceptual frameworks associated with just governance. Initially, the reader is introduced to the food systems approach. Gaining traction in analysis of agri-food governance, the food systems approach offers an encompassing view of relevant and interconnected aspects and linkages of the food system. The approach assists with a holistic perspective of the food system which remains an especially advantageous tool for policy review (Grant, 2015). Thereafter, several theories of just governance are applied in this work. Rousseau's social contract theory underpins an illustration of just governance from a philosophic interpretation of sovereignty and 'general will' and how they intersect with Marxian thought and the aspirations of food sovereignty. Social contract theory, however, remains unable to establish in greater detail the existing organisation and authoritarian structures governing the food system. Hence, this research adopts a Weberian notion of authority. Despite Weber's consideration of legal rational authority as grounds for effective bureaucracy, given the extent to which *maladroit traditional* and *legal rational authority* exhibit maladministration, further theoretical foundation is required. Thus, this work considers elite theory to consider the extent to which governance is beholden to the hegemonic capital which likely compromises its legitimacy and efficacy.

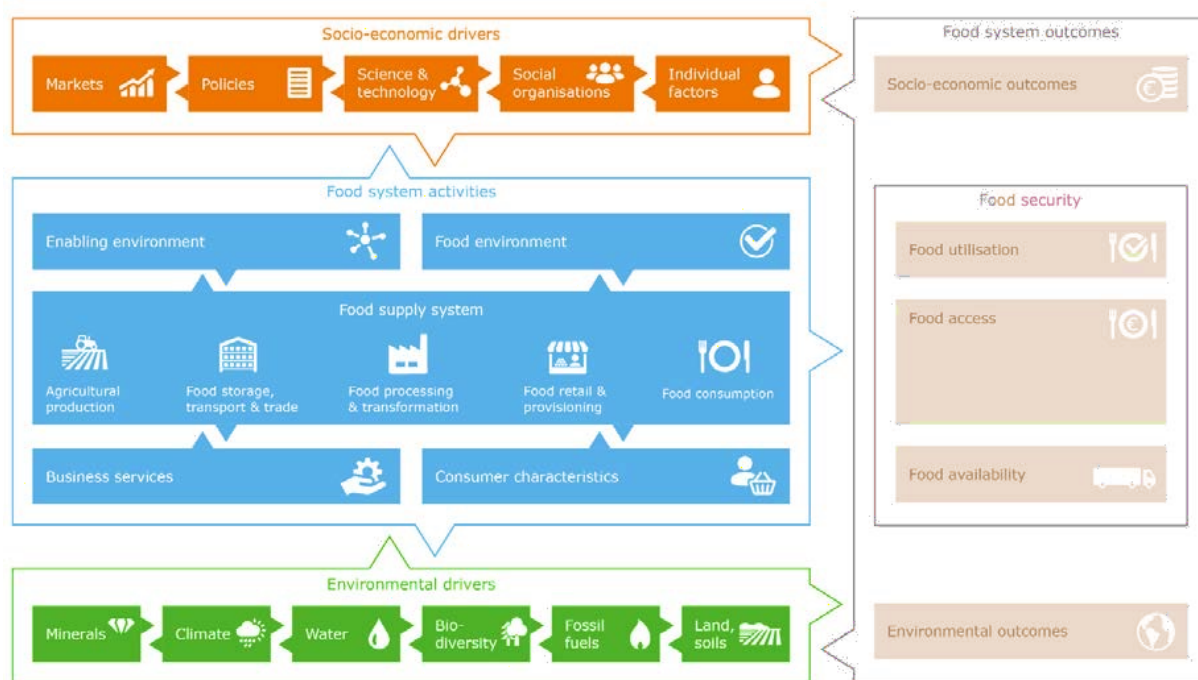
3.13. Food Systems Approach

Predominant scholarship in search of policy and technological solutions to food insecurity has been the responsibility of agronomists and members of the biophysical sciences (Ingram, 2011), rather than social scientists. Therefore, traditional approaches have largely concerned themselves with seeking alternative methods for greater production and marketed output (Ingram, 2011; Grant, 2015), despite country's like South Africa being food sufficient at a national level (Kirsten, 2017). This traditional approach often engenders a unidimensional interpretation, and subsequently narrow strategies and policies of regulation, which, "all too often see examples of unintended consequences that have been designed without taking the broader food system in account" (Grant, 2015: 87).

However, the 1990s saw a shift in academia, acknowledging the need to move beyond a one-dimensional view of agri-food and take cognisance of the wider socio-ecological complexities associated with food systems. The approach, rather, views the food system as characterised by a vast array of interconnected internal agents and processes. These processes are affected by a multitude of external factors: political, social, ecological and economic (Grant, 2015), which dictate how the food system is able to operate. Therefore, they require particularly contextually-appropriate governance arrangements. Thus, the food systems approach emerges as a holistic interpretation and employed in this research due to its ability to consolidate the complexities and inextricable linkages associated with social, political and economic elements.

Consequently, scholarship and subsequent policy recommendations via the food systems approach are better able to “broaden the perspective when seeking solutions for the root causes of problems such as poverty, malnutrition and climate change” by acknowledging existing and potentially various, and sometimes conflicting drivers, feedback loops and outcomes (van Berkum, Dengerink and Ruben, 2018: 2). In viewing the current modes of agri-food governance via a systems approach, the potential critique and role of food sovereignty in legislative arrangements may be located in the broader food system, thus, resulting in more comprehensive analysis and systems-sensitive governance recommendations.

Figure 1: Showing the Food Systems Approach



(Source: van Berkum, Dengerink and Ruben, 2018)

Van Berkum, Dengerink and Ruben (2018) indicate three alternative, pragmatic benefits to adopting the above food systems approach. Firstly, the food systems approach provisions the researcher with a predetermined checklist of factors which require attention for effectively confronting food issues, particularly those associated with governance revision. Secondly, the approach allows for the confrontation of varying shifts in climate and environment by paying due diligence to vulnerabilities in food systems. Consequently, insight allows for a bolstering of system's resilience to climate and other shifts, such as those manifested by agroecology (van Berkum, Dengerink and Ruben, 2018). Third, the food systems approach seeks to determine the major factors threatening the system, "hence identifying effective interventions" in governance to confront issues surrounding the right to food, (van Berkum, Dengerink and Ruben, 2018: 2), which remains fundamental to this research's objectives.

To do so, the food systems approach looks to a wide range of processes and interconnected facets influencing how society governs and procures its food. Particular attention is given to the feedback loops which play out between the various interconnected links of the system (van Berkum, Dengerink and Ruben, 2018). Specifically, "in this conceptualisation, food system activities are linked to socio-economic and environmental drivers which deliver food systems outcomes" (Dekeyser, Ramapa, D'Alessandro and Molina, 2020: 4). Thus, this approach provides an invaluable multi-tool and conceptual mechanism for this work. Notwithstanding, analysis by means of a food systems approach is often considered an overwhelming objective, especially in governance and policy matters (Dekeyser et al., 2020). Fortunately, to mitigate the sheer complexity of this undertaking, this analysis will align itself with the work of Termeer et al. (2018) whose invaluable diagnostic framework for food system governance arrangements, consequently provides indicators for a streamlined land and agri-food governance analysis. Indeed, Termeer et al. (2018: 85) argue that,

"Although policymakers and scientists are increasingly embracing the food system perspective, it has been poorly reflected in institutional terms. We aim to fill this gap by addressing the question as to what forms of governance are most appropriate to govern food systems in a more holistic way."

Thus, the food systems approach provides an intricate means of analysis of all aspects of the food system for viable, effective governance. It locates this provincial research within the context of the wider food system and, thus, facilitates a sensitivity towards responsible governance recommendations by recognising that shifting policy may enhance one aspect of the system, but may threaten another. Consequently, a thorough policy analysis may occur, and recommendations may better identify repercussions echoing throughout the various drivers, activities and outcomes in the system, for women especially.

3.14. Adopting Termeer et al.'s (2018) Diagnostic Framework for Food System Governance Arrangements.

Owing to the sheer scope of the research, its commitment to a systems view, and its associated time constraints, the author invoked the assistance of an existing diagnostic framework for governance analysis. Fortunately, Termeer et al. (2018) offer a diagnostic framework for food system governance arrangements, in accordance with the food systems approach, which is imbricated by feminist food sovereignty as per the researcher's objectives. Their theoretical model puts forward five indicators, to be observed in a food systems policy review, which remain crucial for effective food governance arrangements. These include: (1) system-based problem framing; (2) boundary-spanning structures; (3) adaptability; (4) inclusiveness; and, (5) transformative capacity. These form the overarching categories of the governance analysis in Chapter Six. Thus, this research critiques governance via a feminist food sovereignty interpretation of these five aspects of governance arrangements, required for effective governance according to Termeer et al.'s (2018) recommendations.

i. System-based Problem Framing

The food system approach considers every aspect of a local, national or global food system as effecting others by forming and dictating outcomes, and thereby cultivating feedback loops. Consequently, Termeer et al. (2018) argue policy that does not account for the interconnection of multiple sub-systems will remain narrow, ineffective and likely detrimental to the alternative sub-systems which were overlooked. For example, food sovereignty argues that small-hold farmers have the right to produce, and collective land to produce upon. To critique land reform policy under this mandate, without using system-based problem framing, would render a precarious policy recommendation as it ignores the global and regional implications of such land reform on local and international market forces. Uncertainty over land reform has shown to exacerbate economic difficulty and hike

inflation, as was the case with Zimbabwe (Kirsten, 2017), causing food price increases and further compromising the agri-food system. Thus, system-based problem framing is adopted to ensure the critique of governance narratives of state and civil society remain effective.

ii. Boundary-spanning Structures

Boundary-spanning structures aim to address “the challenge of siloed organisational structures” by observing the extent to which governance transcends the boundaries of departments, sectors and organisations (Termeer et al., 2018: 86). Incohesive and even contradictory policy stymies the transformation of agri-food and land governance. Thus, effective policy operates across, and in concurrence with, various institutions, stakeholders and structures (Termeer et al., 2018). By observing the potentially conflicting narratives of third sector and state in agri-food governance, this framework enables the research to examine the various rifts amongst governmental departments and amongst third sector organisations. Consequently, a sound and more thorough review may be cultivated.

iii. Adaptability

Socio-economic, geopolitical and environmental change all have repercussions for a particular food system, and, hence, food governance must remain “feasible and optimal under a dynamic environment” (Termeer et al., 2018: 86). Particular attention is thus given to the respective ability of reviewed policies to shift with various stressors. For example, food sovereignty critics of the food system argue for a shift to agroecology over industrial farming to mitigate the threat of climate change (LVC, 2018). Policy is therefore critiqued according its own ability to shift with changing phenomena, anthropogenic or otherwise, such as increasing urbanisation. Resultantly, effective policy recommendations are rendered, more readily able to deal with factors which may compromise the food system as it shifts.

iv. Inclusiveness

Inclusiveness refers to the extent that governance has reflected and echoed the views, aspirations and key concerns of external stakeholders. In this research, particular attention is given to the voice of third sector, namely food sovereignty advocates. According to Hospes and Brons (2016), third sector has the on-the-ground knowledge and agency enabling valuable contributions to food system governance. Termeer et al. (2018:

86) note that “civil society do not think in silos” and, therefore, are able to view the interconnected aspects of a food system, such as the gender asymmetries which are of primary concern for this research. Consequently, in analysing the inclusiveness aspect of particular arrangements, their ability to give considerable voice to food sovereignty advocacy, greater illumination on the dissonant narratives of third sector and state may be garnered. Resultantly, these views are consolidated, rendering more effective governance for the benefit of marginalised communities.

v. Transformative Capacity

Governance organisations are often strongly opposed to transformative alternatives (Termeer et al., 2018). However, it is apparent that current paths remain inefficient, and with the radical paradigm shift espoused by food sovereignty advocates, the transformative capacity of policy is a necessary point of analysis. Thus, under the diagnostic framework provided by the food systems approach, this research is able to examine the capacity of governance to make such shifts toward a food sovereignty matrix. Furthermore, highlighting transformative capacity in agri-food and land policy may offer possible points of entry or integration in which food sovereignty may be amalgamated to augment and expand transformative capacity of governance.

It is clear the food systems approach offers a valuable means of locating the linkages of governance, gender dynamics and food sovereignty advocacy within the broader provincial food system. Moreover, expanded work on the food systems approach, manifested by Termeer et al.’s (2018) diagnostic framework, offers a much need basis for conceptually streamlining this analysis by looking to the principles above. Consequently, these frameworks enable an efficient and erudite scrutiny of policy and third sector narratives throughout a range of issues in food systems.

3.15. Rousseau’s Just Governance: Sovereignty and Social Contract

To understand the governance of such systems, and the extent to which that governance may be considered just and legitimate from a moral and philosophical standing, this study turns to the seminal work of Rousseau (1762). Argument is still made for the validity of Rousseau’s thought in better understanding contemporary governance, and administration research and practise (Shaapera, 2015). As such, Rousseau’s concepts of social contract, sovereignty, and ‘general will’ imbricate the illustrations and conceptualisation of this research. Moreover, Rousseau’s understanding of governance

aligns coherently with Marxian thought (Rotenstreich, 1949). In reflecting upon these corroborations below, a theoretical uniformity is achieved within this research across its matrices of interest.

The core of Rousseau's thought was concerned with establishing connections and regulations amongst members of a given society which afforded them necessary social protection while not infringing upon individual free-will (Evans, 1977). For Rousseau, human beings, prior to the societal construction, presided within the 'state of nature', in which people were devoid of subordination (Shaapera, 2015). In this state, people were considered by Rousseau as being inherently blameless, concerned only with personal self-preservation, or *amour de soi*. With the advent of personal possession and division of labour came a greater need for a social contract in which human beings were increasingly required to sacrifice personal liberty for social protection through regulation.

This sentiment aligns with the Marxian interpretations employed in this research. Rousseau's thought, like Marx's historic materialism, reflects a strong argument for the personal possession, accumulation of capital, and division of labour as a fundamental cause of social discord (Rotenstreich, 1949). Indeed, "like Marx, Rousseau is concerned with man's separation from his natural state, he considers the advent of division of labour to be a critical step in the development of man's alienation" (Cambell, 2012: 6). Thus, both Marx and Rousseau would posit that the hierarchical structure resultant from the capitalist mode of production (or the pursuit and maintenance of personal wealth) is at the core of individual and societal conflict.

Regarding political power, this initial governance arrangement is argued by Rousseau as comparable to the family structure. Rousseau (1972: 2) illustrated this by arguing that, "the ruler corresponds to the father, and the people to the children; and all, being born free and equal, alienate their liberty only for their own advantage". For Rousseau (1762), however, chief concern was the legitimacy of political arrangements, believing that no person is naturally ordained with the right to rule over another. Therefore, in order for governance, or the control over members of a society, to be deemed morally and politically legitimate, Rousseau (1762) argued that all members are required to relinquish their rights: "for, in the first place, as each gives himself absolutely, the conditions are the same for all; and, this being so, no one has any interest in making them burdensome to others" (1762: 6). In doing so, collective governance would manifest a unified 'sovereign' in which

communal responsibility would ensure a reflection of the 'general will' (Evans, 1977). Thus, in entering Rousseau's social contract, the individual is placed in a dual capacity; being beholden to the sovereign while also manifesting the sovereign. It was Rousseau's belief that the policy and regulation developed by this popular sovereignty, rather than dependence upon an alien state, would better reflect the 'general will' for a just society (Evans, 1977).

Rousseau's understanding would later become a pillar of Marxian thought (Rotenstreich, 1949), and moreover, the author argues this form of social contract appeals to a food sovereignty insight. Food sovereignty places emphasis on the localisation of decision making in the food system, arguing for the political, social and economic sovereignty of smallholder farmers (LVC, 2018). LVC (2018), as the stalwart organisation responsible for the incipience of food sovereignty, aims to localise the control of food systems and governance. Rather than maintaining a status quo of dependence on state and other authorities, argued to act on behalf of capital agribusiness, food sovereignty reflects an element of Rousseau's and Marx's interpretation: Regulation should be the 'general will', i.e. food systems governance should be designed in accordance with those central to the food system and agrarian society, in this context black African smallholder women.

In this regard, it is clear that the general sentiments of Rousseau's social contract theory offer a blueprint for just governance. Moreover, in adopting this theory in analysis, it reflects both the profundity of food sovereignty's commitment to 'sovereign' society, and aligns with the underlying tenets of the neo-Marxist theory. Furthermore, it exposes the extent to which neoliberal modes of local and global governance, and a food regime which acts for the benefit of hegemonic capital, contravene Rousseau's understanding of an egalitarian social contract engendering just governance.

3.16. Weber's Authority, Bureaucracy and Legitimacy

Given the theoretical and philosophical visions of Rousseau's just social contract, and the efforts of the food sovereignty movement to realise these visions, social agents are yet to gain control over their food system. Thus, although Rousseau provides a philosophic theory for critiquing governance, his form of social contract is yet realised, necessitating the need for a Weberian understanding of the current modalities of governance which compromise this sovereignty. To understand how these modalities are made 'legitimate' and how they manifest in reality, the researcher uses Weberian theories of authority and

bureaucracy. In doing so, Weberian theory of bureaucracy offers a much-needed explanation of the manner in which this maladroitness social contract occurs with relevance to the rural, South African context.

A primary concern for Weber was the extent to which increasingly vast organisations were influencing socio-economic and political life and engendering the subordination of individual liberties (Beetham, 1985). Consequently, Weber attempted to revise the interconnection of democracy and bureaucracy; arguing that that latter transcended a mode of administration and instead manifested a structure of power in its own right (Beetham, 1985). Weber was concerned that governance was being derived from the influence of formidable industry and business rather than what Rousseau would consider the general will; an insight which will be discussed later. In this regard, Weber reviewed the role, the legitimacy, and quality of authority as central to effective governance (Beetham, 1985). Weber provides a means of theorising these institutions according to his categorisations of authority, namely: charismatic authority, traditional authority and legal authority (Guzmán, 2014). These respective arrangements are advantageous, in so much as they provide examples of the forms in which governance is manifested in this work. Particular diligence to traditional and legal authority is provided below as the reigning modes of governance in the context of land and agri-food governance in this study.

i. Traditional Authority

Traditional authority, in the Weberian sense, regards an institution like chieftaincy as “based on respect for the eternal past, belief in the rightness and appropriateness of the traditional or customary ways of doing things” (Fry and Raadschelders, 2014: 35). This mode of governance and administration is often at risk of failure; lacking formality leading to ill-formed and arbitrary governance. Additionally, for Weber, lacking formal training resulting in incompetent administration, and the level of individual power without checks and balances can result in personal nepotism or action for the authority’s own advantage (Fry and Raadschelders, 2014).

This hypothesis aligns with several accounts of the actions of traditional authority in the context of KZN. In rural KZN, there is dual mode of governance: Both customary law and state legislature prescribe the formal and informal land and agri-food policies of the area. These authorities wield considerable power in the province, specifically in control over land, of which over a third is held by the Ingonyama Trust (Aardenburg and Nel, 2019).

An example of the concerns of Weber can be seen in the actions of Makhasaneni traditional authority in KZN who gave permission to Jindal Mining to prospect on community members' fields, without consent. After which, people awoke to find their ancestral graves compromised, their water streams being poisoned, and the resultant death of their livestock and the destruction of their crops (Buthelezi and Yeni, 2016: 10). Examples of this action by traditional authorities are vast; the Ingonyama Trust, in Northern KZN and the amaZulu king's own corrupt dealings with mining companies are widely acknowledged (Leonard, 2019; Aardenburg and Nel, 2019). It is clear, therefore, that the Weberian understanding of a traditional authority is aligned with the governance arrangements associated with this research in so far as customary governance forms a major factor in rural development.

ii. Legal Authority

Conversely, a novel form of authority gained prominence through processes of modernisation and rationalisation and this social mutation engendered the predominance of *legal rational authority* (Hoogenboom and Ossewaarde, 2005). This form of dominance was deemed legitimate authority based on the idea that the entitlement to govern is drawn from the formal and rational procedures of large bureaucracy (Hoogenboom and Ossewaarde, 2005). As Weber 1978: 215 (in Lane, 2017) noted, it rests "on a belief in the legitimacy of enacted rules and the rights of those elevated to authority under such rules to issue commands". Hence, it was a belief facilitated by rationality, organisation, and bureaucratic structures.

In this work's locus, *legal rational authority* is given to the KwaZulu-Natal Legislature (KZNLC). The 80 members of the KZNLC are responsible for governance, for passing provincial legislation, and oversee the enacting and implementation of these policies (KZNLC, 'About Us', n.d). The authority of this government is made legitimate through party and public election and a plethora of bureaucratic processes. As this work's foci remains agri-food and land governance arrangements, created by the legal rational authority, Weber's assumptions around their legitimacy are of particular interest in this research.

It is clear Weber's insights on governance are of conceptual value to this research. However, it will be questioned below whether the neoliberal policies enacted by KZNLC should be considered legitimate, in so far as they potential reflect the will of hegemonic capital rather than the 'general will', in Rousseauian terms, for governance validity.

3.17. Elite Theory: Corporatocracy in Governance

Weber considered *legal rational authority* as the most efficient and legitimate modality of administration. However, this hypothesis poses a theoretical shortcoming for this research: It fails to explain the maladministration, corruption, corporatocracy, nepotism and incompetency associated with *legal rational authority* in the context of South Africa. Thus, this work turns to an elite theory of governance, to assist in expanding Weber's notion of authority, and shedding further light on the workings of *rational legal authority*. However, that is not to say that the use of elite theory diverts from a Weberian understanding or even a Marxist one which would potentially compromise this work's theoretical congruence. Lopez (2013: 2) acknowledges, "current elite theory often tends to be Weberian," and relies considerably on the Weberian notions of authority and domination previously illustrated. Moreover, it is not a theory which conflicts with the agrarian neo-Marxist interpretations exhibited above. Lopez (2013) notes that several Marxist thinkers have employed elite theory, not least of which is Mills' 'Power of the Elite' (1956) which is discussed below. Therefore, there is little doubt concerning a potential theoretical ambiguity or conceptual dissonance within this research, as both the Marxist and Weberian analysis may be complimented and expanded by the use of elite theory.

Elite theory, according to Mariotti (2020), is fundamentally concerned with power, and specifically, the manner in which power is exercised by an elite minority over wider society. Thus, the elite theorist aims to hypothesise as to "who governs, even beyond formal or constitutional appearance" (Mariotti, 2020: 1). For Mills (1956), one such group who manifested this extensive control were the economic elite, the bourgeoisie or large conglomerates. Although this strikes of conspiracy rather than theory, given the context of South African corruption, elite theory, and specifically its emphasis on corporatocracy, cannot be dismissed.

Elite theory, explains in greater detail the 'state capture' phenomenon which threatens the legitimacy of governance in the country. State capture, according to Hellman and Kaufmann (2001: 1), may be defined "as the efforts of firms to shape the laws, policies, and regulations of the state to their own advantage by providing illicit private gains to public officials". Thus, it provides an appropriate example of the elite theory hypothesis. State capture gained wide public concern in the country following the exposure of the duplicitous

relationship of the Gupta family and high-ranking public officials, and the extent to which the Gupta family influenced provincial and national agricultural governance.

The Vrede Farm Project is a worthy example reflecting the extent to which elite state capture influences provincial agricultural governance. The Vrede Project was created in 2012, a governance arrangement intended to provide 250 million rand to poor black African farmers in the Free State province (Shuma, 2020). Following an investigation by the Public Protector, it transpired that no farmers received the benefits of the governance arrangement, and the money was deposited into a Guptas' personal account. The Guptas and members of government are currently being investigated. However, in noting that the Guptas had no interest in agriculture or providing agricultural support or services to the state; it is clear their actions and that of government were illegitimate. Thus, several high ranking provincial governmental officials have been implicated; an occurrence which may have cost the lives of three whistle-blowers⁴ (Moroe, 2020).

Therefore, in the South African context, state capture of the country is central to understanding mechanisms and characteristics of governance. As such, the researcher argues that to study governance at any meaningful level, especially from a left-leaning perspective, one must account for the potential influence of hegemonic capital on governance in analysis. Moreover, concerning an insight into the necessary plight of food sovereignty, elite theory provides a valid perspective on phenomena such as foreign land grabbing and the centralisation of corporate agriculture.

Regards the latter, Mills (1956: 3), in his Marxist-elite theory commented: "the economy, once a great scatter of small productive units in autonomous balance, has become dominated by two or three hundred giant corporations, administratively and politically interrelated, which together hold the keys to economic decisions." This insight is aligned with the aspirations of the food sovereignty movement, in so far as it aims to revoke the hegemonic control of large corporate agri-business over the food system, transferring it back to small-holder farmers. However, in noting the minor extent to which food sovereignty has entered into provincial and national agri-food governance in South African (Ngcoya and Kumarakulasingam, 2016), elite theory offers a potential insight as to why. Thus, from an elite theory perspective, particular attention must be made in critiquing

⁴ Vuyisile Mlambo, Philemon Ngwenya (beneficiary), and Moses Tshake (auditor) were kidnapped, tortured and thereafter murdered; crimes believed to be the result of their actions against corruption (Moroe, 2020).

governance, and the just nature of governance, by observing who governance arrangements are designed to benefit. It is apparent, therefore, that the insights of elite theory provide a critical analysis of governance and the extent to which governance is influenced via the will of hegemonic capital. By doing so, a deeper and more rigorous theoretical foundation, aligned with the alternative Weberian, Marxian and critical realist theories of this work, is employed to better identify and confront maladroitness governance arrangements in the country.

3.18. Conclusion

Part Two of this chapter began via illustration of the food system's approach. This conceptual framework was shown to be effective in formulating the parameters of the food system, and reveal its respective interconnections. It provides the framework and thematic categories in which the consolidated feminist food sovereignty analysis is imbricated. Thereafter, this section looked to the work of Rousseau to further understand the philosophical underpinnings, and a model of just governance. It made clear to the reader that the work of Rousseau aligned with the heterodox economic Marxian interpretations illustrated in part one of this research. Thus, Rousseau's theories offer a degree of theoretical and conceptual uniformity underpinning this analysis.

It was made apparent, however, that Rousseau's work is largely philosophical and further theory was required to comprehend existing governance structures. Therefore, due consideration was given to the theories of Weber, which enabled a valuable explanation of existing authoritarian and bureaucratic structures. To assist this research in theorising why these structures remain ineffective, despite Weber's consideration of legal authority, elite theory reflected the potential role of hegemonic capital to influence governance. Lastly, this interpretation, and evidence for its plausibility, was reflected in the particular context of the South African food system.

Chapter Four: Research Methodology

4.1. Introduction

The following chapter considers the methodology employed in both phases one and two of this research. Phase one refers to inductive methodology whereby the conceptual robustness of a feminist food sovereignty framework is consolidated. Conversely, phase two refers to the deductive methodology adopted in the deployment of this conceptual apparatus upon governance arrangements, critiquing both its efficacy and relevant provincial policy. The section will begin by illustrating the research paradigm, approach and design. Thereafter, the reader is introduced to the setting of this research, and several reasons for its suitability as a location for the study of smallholder women in agri-food governance will be made apparent. The reader is then introduced to the sampling methodology and criteria for NGOs, and the methodology employed to identify interviewees and governance arrangements. Data collection methodology is illustrated and argument made ratifying the use of participant observation, semi-structured interviews and document analysis within this research to achieve triangulation. Grounded theory data analysis methodology will be discussed in so far as it enables an inductive investigation of the findings garnered. Thereafter, the thematic analysis methodology employed in policy analysis (phase two) will also be discussed, specifically, with reference to Termeer et al.'s (2018) Diagnostic Framework for Food Systems Governance Arrangements. Lastly, this chapter will reflect upon the limitations, delimitations and ethical considerations associated with the work and the steps taken to mitigate them wherever possible.

4.2. Methodological Orientation

The epistemic stances of this work were discussed in the former chapter. However, the extent to which the critical realist tradition influenced the methodological choices of the researcher were not made apparent. Regarding collection and analysis methodology, critical realism allows for the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods of research (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014). The researcher took advantage of the flexibility associated with this aspect of the critical realist paradigm: qualitative methods of collection and analysis were employed, relying on the more constructivist “hermeneutical bent and fluidity” of critical realist grounded theory (Oliver, 2011: 8). The following aspects reflect upon the research position engendered by this orientation.

i. Applied

Research, according to Davis (2014), can be grouped into two respective classes, characterised by their fundamental objectives. While 'pure' research is ultimately concerned with the generation of new knowledge, applied research reflects a greater concern for facilitating social change. The axiology associated with critical realism engenders research with the fundamental goals of achieving such social transformation (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014). Hence, the role of applied research is to "investigate whether solutions to social problems can be found...assess and evaluate existing policies and practises...recommend change" (Davis, 2014: 75). Given the researcher's concern for the consolidation of food systems, gender equity and associated governance it was clear it conforms to the criteria of applied research.

ii. Qualitative

The researcher opted for the exclusive use of qualitative methodology. It became clear that numerical, quantitative metrics could not adequately explore the perspectives of food sovereignty at the depth required. Indeed, qualitative research emphasises a "nonlinear path...conducting detailed examinations that arise in the natural flow of social life", rather than the positivist paradigms associated with quantitative research (Choy, 2014: 100). In noting the critical realism which undergirds this work, and the need for greater depth and detail to adequately garner insights of the third sector, qualitative methodology would better engender potential solutions to the precarious position of women smallholder farmers.

iii. Field Research

Although field research may be employed in a quantitative study, Babbie (2011) argues that its methodology remains more aligned with qualitative characteristics as those described above (Babbie, 2011 in Strydom and Bezuidenhout, 2014). There are several approaches to field research, such as case study, ethnography, and grounded theory. During the proposal process, a case study approach was originally considered. However, after noting the extent to which the feminist linkages to the food sovereignty paradigm required bolstering (Bezner Kerr et al., 2019; Dekeyser, Korsten and Fioramonti, 2018; Agarwal, 2014; Portman, 2014), the use of grounded theory methodology was necessitated. As grounded theory research aims to draw theoretical conclusions from data, an inductive approach characterises this work.

iv. Exploratory

Exploratory research aims to investigate relatively novel phenomena, frequently via qualitative means (du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014). The fundamental considerations of this work have been analysed in some detail: feminised deprivation, smallholder farming women, food systems, associated governance, land governance and food sovereignty have all seen concerted attention in academia. However, little research has endeavoured to view them with an intersectional lens concomitantly, and even less so in the context of KZN. Given the diversity of social, geo-political, and economic arrangements, the particular nature of South African socio-historic causalities, the context dependence of governance arrangements, this work was largely exploratory.

4.3. Population and Setting: KwaZulu-Natal Province

The following considers both the research setting, and population of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN).

Figure 2: Showing KwaZulu-Natal



(Source: Encyclopedia Britannica)

The study is located in, and concerned with, the province of KZN. The province can be found on the East Coast of South Africa, sharing its northern border with Mozambique, and its southern border with the Eastern Cape. KZN provides the second greatest contribution to the nation's GDP (16%) with its notable industries including agriculture, mining, and tourism (KZN, Socio-Economic Review and Outlook, 2019/20). However, the province is vulnerable to flooding and severe drought, which was observed in 2015, 2016 and 2022. Significant decline in crop production was seen, indicating the area's particular need for climate resilient farming methodologies.

Demographically, KZN is home to over 11 million people of which only 7 175 492 are of economically active age. This high dependency ratio of 58% places disproportionate pressure on those of working age and insidiously compromises the province's economy (KZN, Socio-Economic Review and Outlook, 2019/20). KZN grapples with severe poverty and food inaccessibility: 36% of the population live below the food poverty line (FPL) and this number increases to over 66% according to the upper bound poverty line (KZN, Socio-Economic Review and Outlook, 2019/20). The province grapples with pervasive unemployment, especially for women, almost a third of whom are unable to find work. According to the provincial government's Socio-Economic Review (2019/20), this unemployment is unlikely to abate in keeping with the level of population growth. Aside from an obvious need for any potentially socio-economically uplifting research in the province, KZN was considered a most suitable context for this work for the following reasons:

1. KZN has the greatest number of households engaged in agricultural production in South Africa (536 225), according to STATS SA (2016);
2. Women significantly outweigh men in small scale farming in the province (61% of small-scale farmers are women).
3. Yet, the province has the highest incidence and intensity of gender-based poverty and second highest rate of rural poverty in the country (KZN, 'Poverty Eradication Plan Master Plan', 2014).

Thus, given KZN's greatest number of smallholders in the country, most of whom are women, and, the highest incidence of gender-based poverty, it was apparent that no province could better exhibit the injustice of feminised poverty alongside feminised

agriculture in South Africa. Therefore, no other province required more immediate and radical alternatives to governance arrangements than the province of KZN.

4.4. Purposive Sampling

In all aspects of this research's methodology, criteria were required to ensure appropriate organisations, participants and governance was engaged with. Thus, this work adopted non-probability, purposive sampling methodology throughout. Diverting from the randomised nature of probability sampling, purposive sampling is a method by which the researcher deliberately selects participants according to their suitability in relation to the study objectives (Cambell, Greenwood, Prior, Shearer, Walkem, Young, Bywaters and Walker, 2020). This occurred in several stages including the selection of NGOs, the sampling of key informant interviewees within those organisations, and an appropriate exemplar of governance arrangements.

4.5. Sampling: Non-Governmental Organisations

There are a wide range of NGOs operating in the sphere of agri-food and land in KZN. Thus, sampling of NGOs began with an internet search of relevant organisations. These organisations' webpages and projects were analysed. Thereafter, organisations were contacted telephonically to ensure that conformed to the following criteria:

1. The organisation had to be a registered NGO,
2. The organisation had to be based and operate in KZN,
3. The organisation had to operate in the landscape of smallholder empowerment,
4. The organisation had to be operational for a minimum of five years.

i. African Conservation Trust

The African Conservation Trust (ACT) was founded in 2000. Its initial focus was upon ecology, being primarily involved in conservation initiatives. In 2010, and with increasing support from the DEA and CoGTA, ACT began implementing programs for small-scale farmers (ACT, 2022). Furthermore, ACT developed the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) course for 'Agroecological Farming', based in KZN. ACT has operated in multiple Southern African countries including Botswana and Malawi. ACT also showed a distinct appreciation for women's role in previous small-scale farming initiatives, with the provision of training and mentoring for 2000 thousand farmers with a positive discrimination of 65% women (ACT, 2022). Moreover, ACT has done extensive work in providing support to

food-based initiatives for schools and over 10 000 homestead gardens, specifically in water-scarce areas.

Currently, ACT is undertaking a mass intervention in three provinces in South Africa, including KZN. This project aims to develop over 25 000 homestead vegetable gardens, including 590 heirloom seedling nurseries “to support the homestead garden network, and break the cycle of dependency on purchased GMO crops” (ACT, 2022: 5). It is clear, therefore, that ACT provides a legitimate example of a food sovereignty advocacy in so much as it maintains an aversion to corporate industrial agriculture, an encouragement of agroecology illustrated in their designing of an NQF agroecology course, an emphasis on autonomy, and sovereignty amongst small-scale farmers, specifically women.

ii. Biowatch

Established in 1999, Biowatch is a leading food sovereignty and agroecology organisation in the country. According to Biowatch (‘About Us’, nd.), their objectives aim to ensure the rights and autonomy of smallholders, and confront industrial agribusiness at local, national and international levels. To do so, Biowatch engages with a vast number of smallholder farmers throughout the province, providing training, support and ongoing assistance in agroecological farming methods. The majority of these beneficiaries are women. Biowatch confronts the hegemony of corporate industrial agribusiness at local, national and international levels. To do so, the organisation engages in research and advocacy by lobbying in parliament and litigating upon policy and legislature. Moreover, Biowatch is committed to the cultivation of IKS in farming methods and the preservation of seed sovereignty. A founding member of the Seed and Knowledge Initiative (SKI), Biowatch aims to resist industrial and GM agriculture through legal and civil protest and maintains an advocacy platform on which they support or challenge governmental policy for the benefit of small-holder farmers.

iii. Fair Food Foundation

The Fair Food Foundation (FFF) was established in 1995 with the aim of confronting food inaccessibility, a lack of agricultural training, and to provide support marginalised agrarian communities. FFF shows considered attention to the “unequal status quo within the agricultural sector” and, as a result, provision a ‘sustainable farmer development support model’ (FFF, ‘History’, n.d: np). This model operates over a range of projects providing financial and educational support to emerging, small-scale farmers in an effort to facilitate

their access into both informal and formal markets. FFF has manifested several projects since its inception, however, its defining characteristic is the creation of the Fair Food Company (FFC). The FFC aimed to provide small-scale farmers with the opportunity to compete in the food market against larger, established agribusiness (FFC, 'Who Are We', n.d). Other projects include farmer development, skills support, and market access to small-scale farmers through their lodestar 'Edamame' project. Their projects have been funded by a wide range of partners including the national lotteries commission, Habitat for Humanity, Old Mutual and Vodacom Foundations and the eThekweni Municipality (FFF, 'Projects', 2021).

iv. LIMA Rural Development Foundation

Established in 1989, LIMA now boasts a diverse portfolio of projects including food and agriculture, social development, environment and land reform among other areas of transformation (LIMA, 'Organisation Profile, 2017). Regarding agri-food, LIMA's projects are geared toward small-scale farmers, expressly women, which was reflected in their Abalimbia Phambili Programme: the "15-year old farmer support programme includes the provision of farmer support services with an emphasis on women empowerment" (LIMA, Organisational Profile, 2017: 5). Alternative projects of interest to this research include the attempts to increase farmer mobilisation and production through support, training and funding. These include organic homesteads, community and school gardens, a broiler project, and agricultural infrastructure development, rainwater harvesting and several pro-environmental initiatives. Lastly, LIMA's involvement in land reform projects in which they undertake; "community consultation, business planning, investor mobilisation, farm management strategies and improved governance" was of particular interest (LIMA, Organisation Profile, 2017: 11). The above projects take place over several provinces in South Africa with the help of 150 staff. It is clear, therefore, that LIMA offers a valuable source for this work, in so far as their diverse portfolio and wide geographic influence enables greater insight across the varied aspects of this research.

4.6. Sampling: Key Informants

Key informant interviews have long been adopted as an effective mode of qualitative inquiry, and their efficacy is particularly acknowledged in governance-focussed study (Lokot, 2021). Key informants refer to individuals able to foster greater insight into a given phenomenon as a consequence of their personal experience or understanding. To select key informants within the various organisations described above, this study adopted

snowball sampling. Snowball sampling, according to Pascoe (2014), is a method of sample selection in which an existing research participant identifies and recommends relevant, alternative participant/s conforming to the criteria and objectives of the research. The criteria dictated was:

1. Participants were required to be over 18 years of age;
2. An active member/employee of their organisation for a period of at least three years;
3. And, the participant had to be willing and available.

To do so, a member of the organisation's leadership cadre including Chief Executive Officers (CEO), Directors and Project Managers were approached as gatekeepers. Although these gatekeepers manifested initial interview participants, particular attention was given to avoid what Bernard (2012: in Fusch and Ness, 2015: 1410) call the 'shaman effect'. The shaman effect refers to the potential for a particular senior participant to "overshadow the data", specifically in the form of gatekeepers who may divert access to key informants "which would hamper the data and collection" (Fusch and Ness, 2015: 1410). Thus, initial subjects were encouraged, as far as possible, to recommend further willing participants involved at diverse levels. The below table illustrates the respective organisations: ACT, Biowatch, FFF and LIMA, the interviewees and their respective positions within their organisation.

Table 1: Interviewees and Organisations

Position and NGO	ACT	Biowatch	FFF	LIMA
Snr Leadership Cadre	2	1	0	0
Project Leadership Cadre	0	1	1	2
Field Assistant, Facilitator	0	1	0	2
Researcher/Analyst	0	1	0	0
Total: 9 Participants	2	4	1	2

4.7. Sampling: Governance Arrangements

Identification of relevant policies proved to be an unforeseen challenge in this research. Government, and especially provincial government policy was often dated or unavailable on departmental websites. Fortunately, the researcher found the KwaZulu-Natal Strategy

for Agrarian Transformation (SAT-KZN, 2015) following telephonic contact with a DARD representative. The governance arrangements associated with the SAT-KZN conformed to the following criteria:

1. Currently in operation,
2. An example of KZN provincial governance,
3. Concerned with agriculture, rural development and rural society.

4.8. Data Collection Methods

Several data collection methods were used within this study, following the scholarship and policy review in Chapter Two:

i. Observational Methodology

What Kawulich (2005) considers a bastion of social science research, observation methodology was the initial mode of inquiry for this work. Despite its established legacy in the social sciences, Mackellar (2013) notes that for both the reader and participant, the level of interaction undertaken by the researcher must be explicit to ensure the ethical soundness and reliability of the findings. Hence, the below illustrates a thorough narrative of the observational methodology employed and the efforts made to reflect its transparency and reliability as a research methodology for this study.

Participant observation is a method of inquiry by which the researcher takes an active role within the group under study, and with the participants having full knowledge of their being a researcher, and their objectives (Kawulich, 2005). As a means of consolidating data collection for grounded theory methodology, observation is both suitable and compatible with its inductive approach (Mackellar, 2013).

The researcher adopted participant observation in the capacity of volunteer for one of the above NGOs on an if and when need basis over the course of several months. This observation was sporadic, however valuable, and included varied responsibilities ranging from assisting with M&E matters and basic clerical work including data capturing and being generally involved in the activities of the organisation. Access was granted by the CEO who acted as gatekeeper after consulting with members of the board and relevant project managers. During the course of this work, the researcher took field notes alongside interviews as recommended by Kawulich (2005). Although for limited duration, several

advantageous arose from the use of participant observational methodology. Firstly, the opportunity to interact with the NGO introduced the researcher to the vernacular frequently used in the space of rural development. Knowledge of particular phrases and terms streamlined the construction of interview questions and improved mutual understanding during the interview process, especially with regards to agricultural terms to which the researcher was previously unfamiliar. Secondly, participant observation provided a more in-depth knowledge of the on-the-ground actions of NGOs which engendered a level of intimacy with the narrative, concepts, practises and ideologies of the organisation under study that an alternative research methodology would not have achieved. Moreover, it assisted in bridging the gap between the theory and the reality of food sovereignty advocacy, aligning with the transformative, critical realist objectives of this work.

However, there are limitations to observation methodology, especially regarding ethical concerns. Due to the reliance upon researcher interpretation, there remains greater potential for bias (Kawulich, 2005). Although, it was noted that all qualitative methodology exhibits the potential for bias (Mackeller, 2013), the researcher paid due consideration to identifying areas of concern throughout the reporting phase to enhance the external reliability of the work. Moreover, the apparent ethical concerns of observational methodology were noted, however, mitigated via absolute transparency with the organisation (Mackeller, 2013). Consequently, greater understanding of food sovereignty in the context of KZN's rural development landscape was facilitated.

ii. Semi-Structured Interviews

Interview methodology is arguably the most common mode of data collection in qualitative research (Geyser, 2021). However, 'interviews' differ considerably according to the particular method favoured by the researcher. In the case of this work, the semi-structured interview was deemed most appropriate, enabling "a blend of closed and open questions, often accompanied by follow-up why or how questions" (Adams, 2015: 493). Several advantages were appealing in the selection of semi-structured methodology: the semi-structured interview struck a balance for the researcher, offering a degree of flexibility while, as acknowledged by Geyser (2021), a list of broad, preconceived questions guided the process, ensuring the relevance and applicability of the findings. Additionally, semi-structured interviews offer a reasonably in-depth insight, and allow for a degree of latitude whereby the interviewee may take an active role in facilitating the interview process (Geyser, 2021). The researcher thought this important given that key informants in these

organisations were experts in their fields. Insights considered pertinent for them to pursue where therefore afforded latitude by the researcher given the degree to which the interviewer respected their expertise.

This aligned with the critical realism which underpins in this research in so much as “the critical theorists believe that knowledge should be co-constructed by the researcher and the research participant to lessen the impact of subjectivity” (Schurink, Schurink, and Fouché, 2021: 301). Given the dearth of insight from food sovereignty advocacy on feminist linkages, the complexity and profundity of the issues at hand, the critical underpinnings of the work and the depth and flexibility afforded by semi-structured interviews, it thus provided a particularly advantageous method. However, this relatively free-flowing form of interviewing may be potentially time-consuming and laborious (Adams, 2015). These interviews started in June 2022 when ethical clearance was given and ended in September 2022. Each interview lasted an average of 60 minutes, however, several follow ups occurred, either telephonically or via email for greater detail on a particular topic or point of interest on which greater clarification was needed.

Given their geographical position across rural KZN, many of the farmer support staff in the field were inaccessible for face-to-face interviews. The researcher, therefore, was compelled to conduct some interviews via Zoom and others face-to-face at the respective offices of interviewees. All interviews were digitally recorded and password protected. During the process, the researcher also undertook note-taking by hand and these were kept under lock and key. The transcribed interview was largely de-naturalistic as any significant physical expressions or actions were noted by hand during the interview itself. The researcher opted to manually transcribe interviews as opposed to using a digital transcription program. This proved invaluable in so much as the researcher found a closer intimacy and knowledge of the data collected.

iii. Document Analysis

During the simultaneous collection and analysis of the data above according to the iterative grounded theory methodology illustrated below, phase two of this research ensued. Document analysis has long been pioneered by sociologists as a mechanism for cultivating credible and valid insight (Bowen, 2009). Strydom (2021) notes that document analysis should not be confused with secondary analysis. The latter aims to draw findings from existing data sets while document analysis looks to garner insight from text that was

created without the fundamental aim of being a data set (Strydom, 2021), such as policy. It is important to note that the following findings concern governance, rather than policy. I.e. the policy itself is a particular example of governance from which the researcher drew deeper insight. Shore and Wright (1997: 14), in their invaluable book 'Anthropology of Policy: Critical Perspectives on Governance and Power,' posit that "if policies are typically tools of government, they are equally tools for studying systems of governance". Thus, document analysis of policies, strategies and other arrangements became a viable avenue of investigation into systems of land and agri-food governance.

The process used for document analysis was contrived along the guidelines put forward by Strydom (2021), to ensure every effort was made to manifest valid and credible insights into governance: Firstly, the selection of documents conformed to the respective objectives of the work. Strydom (2021), acknowledges the importance of ensuring the credibility of the documents. Hence, they were collected through a thorough online review of provincial government department websites. To ensure that the document selected was the most current, valid, and superseded previous strategies, the DARD was contacted telephonically for reassurance. Secondly, raw data garnered from the documents was defined according to sound encoding processes. Parameters for this protocol were drawn with the assistance of Termeer et al's. (2018) Diagnostic Framework for Food Systems Governance Arrangements. Consequently, a transparent, credible and flexible model allowed for the application of feminist food sovereignty in the established parameters defined by Termeer et al. (2018). The researcher engaged in thematic analysis described below, argued by Bowen (2009) to be an apt methodology for analysing documents.

There were several benefits to the adoption of document analysis. As noted by Bowen (2009), document analysis has long been considered an effective means of data triangulation when used in conjunction with alternative methodologies. Triangulation is the use of multiple research approaches in understanding the same phenomena for the benefit of greater credibility and mitigating bias (Heale and Forbes, 2013). This form of qualitative triangulation is argued by Heale and Forbes (2012: 98) to "promote a more comprehensive understanding of phenomena under study and to enhance the rigour of a research study". Indeed, the aim of this document analysis methodology was to both test the newly consolidated feminist food sovereignty framework as a mode of critique, while concomitantly illustrating a potential food sovereignty alternative to maladroitness governance.

4.9. Data Analysis

Phase one data analysis used grounded theory methodology to draw conceptual conclusions from the data collected via observation and semi-structured interviews. Phase two data analysis included the use of thematic analysis in critiquing governance arrangements.

i. Grounded Theory Methodology

Reasons for selecting grounded theory from an epistemic perspective have been discussed at length. Thus, this section will consider only the methodological aspects of grounded theory. “Grounded theory is an inductive methodology that provides systematic guidelines for gathering, synthesizing, analysing, and conceptualizing qualitative data for the purpose of theory construction” (Jørgensen, 2001: 6396). In this regard, grounded theory diverts from the dominant traditions inherent in most qualitative research, rather promulgating the simultaneous analysis of data during the process of data collection (Jørgensen, 2001). Therefore, it is an iterative, cyclical method in which the researcher is obliged to codify and categorise raw data, as that data is made available, to strengthen the effectiveness of further collection and analysis. Consequently, researchers are less likely to be influenced by presuppositions or alternative influences, contributing to the rigour and credibility of the work’s findings (Jørgensen, 2001). The researcher also decided to include the document analysis alongside the analysis of findings from participant observation and interviews in this iterative process. The researcher stresses the value of this decision in so much as it facilitated a dialectic process between third sector insights, engendering valuable comparison, and facilitating theoretical saturation.

However, that iterative process of consistently referring back to the SAT-KZN did not compromise the inductive nature of the grounded theory analysis applied to the consolidation of feminist food sovereignty. Indeed, to ensure the integrity of this analysis, the researcher followed Charmaz’s (2008) recommendations. Charmaz (2008) considers four stages of data analysis to be pivotal to the success of a grounded theory methodology: coding; analytic writing in the form of memos; theoretical sampling and lastly theoretical saturation. The coding process is manifested in two phases; initial and focused coding (Charmaz, 2008). Initial coding regards a prior interrogation of the data, which occurs concurrently as data is collected. Although there are multiple ways to conduct initial coding, the researcher predominantly adopted line-by-line processes, argued by Charmaz (2008) to be a formidable tool for interview and narrative observation of data. Following

initial coding, focused coding commenced. The aim of focused methodology was to consolidate the original codes in larger bodies of data according to theme and subtheme (Charmaz, 2008). The result of which can be viewed in Table 2 in the following Chapter Five. The reason for doing so is twofold: firstly, the use of larger, more profound codes streamlines the process. Secondly, the discretionary selection of applicable codes provides the bases for the theoretical categories which, after further scrutiny, manifest the consolidated feminist food sovereignty framework.

The process further allowed the researcher the greater ability to draw connections between the fragmented codes built from line-by-line coding (Birks and Mills, 2015). During this concomitant data collection and coding, constant comparative analysis was adopted according to the recommendations of Birks and Mills (2015). Text, including previous scholarship, was integrated and compared with codes, codes compared with categories, and categories between categories. As noted by Birks and Mills (2015), the comparisons engender an abductive method of reasoning, wherein a formulated theoretical interconnection between food sovereignty and feminist intersectionality first became apparent. Throughout the grounded theory analysis, a process of memo-writing is paramount (Birks and Mills, 2015). This, according to Jørgensen (2001: 6398), “constitutes the pivotal intermediate state between coding data and drafting analysis. Through memo-writing, grounded theorists fill out their codes and identify gaps”. Memo-writing was a process of considerable importance in so far as the act of writing down particular insights provides the opportunity for emergence of theoretical insights. The researcher did this largely by hand, using A1 sized paper, drawing and developing memos through mind-maps, extensive text, and tables, diagrams and illustrations to assist in comprehending the relationships between quotes, codes, categories, existing literature, themes and subthemes. The process proved an exciting and enjoyable one.

To consolidate these findings, the grounded theorist ultimately engages in theoretical sampling. Theoretical sampling seeks to bolster the emergent conceptualisations garnered from both the coding and memo-writing processes for the purpose of refining, sharpening and bolstering the ultimate theoretical conclusions (Jørgensen, 2001). In this stage, the researcher continued data collection with more participants and further analysis, and delved deeper into the complexity of the conceptual findings illustrated through memo writing. Consequently, the process of reviewing in theoretical sampling

facilitated sounder conceptual insight and bolsters the theory building within this work (Jørgensen, 2001).

This process is concluded when a point of saturation is reached. Fusch and Ness (2015) posit that when research has achieved saturation further collection and analysis would not result in a diversion from the existing theoretical findings. As noted by Wray, Markovic and Manderson (2007), the successful reaching a point of saturation for the development of the grounded theory relies on multiple methods. Under the recommendations of Fusch and Ness (2015), the use of (1) observational and (2) interview methodology provided considerable potential for the research to achieve a point of saturation. However, the researcher reached a point of saturation when document analysis was considered alongside the other forms of data collection, at which point the feminist food sovereignty was consolidated to a point of valid application upon governance arrangements.

ii. Thematic Analysis

To apply a bolstered food sovereignty insight, thematic codification of governance arrangements had to occur, and thereafter be contrasted and critiqued concurrently with the food sovereignty analytic consolidated in phase one. The complexity of this undertaking necessitated the need to adopt Termeer et al.'s (2018) Diagnostic Framework for Food Systems Governance Arrangements, illustrated in Chapter Three, to manifest a legitimate food systems analysis. The framework was adopted flexibly to deductively identify themes of consequence according to recommendations illustrated the seminal work of Termeer et al. (2018). Although various alternative sub-themes inevitably arose, their work gave the researcher a benchmark of what to pay particular diligence to, providing a valuable springboard for the analysis process. It streamlined the process, ensuring academically and pragmatically significant findings based on a foundation of Termeer et al's (2018) scholarship.

Braun and Clark (2012: 57) define thematic analysis as “a method for systematically identifying, organising, and offering insight into patterns of meaning (themes) across a data set.” Rather than focusing on outlying themes within the data, the thematic analyst aims to identify recurring patterns and commonalities. These commonalities are, thereafter, considered by the researcher, and if deemed pertinent to the research, codified (Braun and Clark, 2012). This provides an element of interpretive flexibility in the analysis of respective governance arrangements. It engendered the opportunity to consider both

the overt and covert themes within the data for greater insight. For example, if a policy maintains a recurring consideration of increased agricultural inputs for commercial farming practise, this may be interpreted as a continued emphasis on neoliberal modalities lacking '*transformative capacity*' of agri-food governance which threaten the livelihoods of small-holder farming women, and therefore, the '*inclusiveness*' of the agri-food system. This insight may be compared and contrasted to the schema engendered by feminist food sovereignty, and an insight into land and agri-food governance at a food systems level is achieved.

This undertaking is guided by the systematic processes put forward by Braun and Clark (2012). Firstly, the researcher is encouraged to become familiar with the raw data, reading the material and making preliminary notes. Thereafter, the researcher began the formal coding processes. The researcher manifested themes according to these relevant codes. The purpose of this phase was to "identify areas of similarity and overlap between codes" (Braun and Clark, 2012: 63). Effort was made to group respective codes according to subthemes and themes. On the recommendation of Braun and Clark (2012) particular emphasis was taken in viewing how these themes intersected with each other and the findings from the participants in phase one. The researcher then entered a stage of review by comparing and contrasting themes and the insights of food sovereignty, noting points of integration and points of dissonance within these themes and deepening the dialectic between the food sovereignty and public sector narratives. These findings were then disseminated in the following chapters of this dissertation.

iii. Qualitative Content Analysis

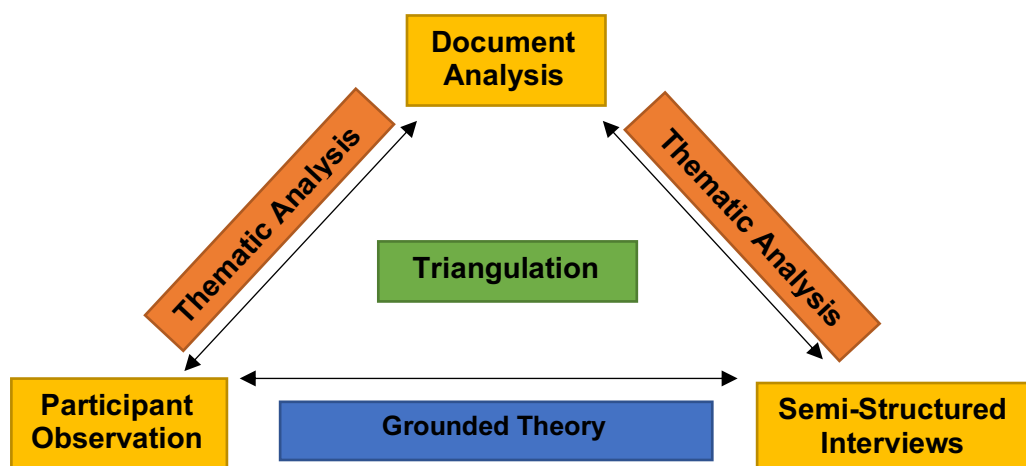
To a lesser extent, analysing SAT-KZN required qualitative content analysis. As noted by Bezuidenhout and Cronje (2014: 234), "qualitative content analysis is used to explore and identify overt and covert themes and patterns imbedded in a particular text". The findings from interviews engendered priori codes such as "autonomy", which, alongside Termeer et al's (2018) diagnostic framework, provided a means of deductive qualitative content analysis. Specifically, this work employed summative qualitative content analysis (SQCA) as opposed to conventional or directed content analysis. SQCA, looks to identify keywords within the text, comparing them and noting their frequency (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005). Should the researcher cease at numbering the times a key phrase arose, this should manifest a quantitatively modality. However, in going further to analyse the underlying themes, greater in-depth qualitative conclusions and interpretations were drawn. The

researcher found this method effective in reflecting the particular emphases of SAT-KZN. For example, the term ‘unemployment’ was mentioned far more than ‘food insecurity’ reflecting the particular priorities of governance. However, it must be noted that this method was used sparingly during data analysis to facilitate greater reliability and emphasise particular findings the researcher felt especially pertinent.

4.10. Achieving Triangulation

Triangulation refers to the use of multiple research methods to studying the same phenomenon to mitigate researcher bias, enhance creditability, and the validity of findings (Jonsen and Jehn, 2009). Triangulation also cultivates greater potential for reaching saturation, and adds considerable rigour to these findings (Fusch, Fusch, and Ness, 2018). In doing so, the researcher adopted an integrative triangulation approach shown by Jonsen and Jehn (2009) to be specifically complimentary to the use of the grounded theory and thematic analysis. To achieve triangulation, this work began through inductive theory building via analysis of data garnered from semi-structured interviews and participant observation. This theoretical insight was concomitantly applied to document analysis, which included the thematic analysis of governance. The process is illustrated in the following diagram.

Figure 3: Triangulation



(Researcher's Compilation, 2022)

4.11. Methodological and Introspective Reflexivity

The use of grounded theory necessitated the interpretations of the researcher. Glaser and Strauss (1967: 251 in Jonsen and Jehn, 2009) argue, “the root of all significant theorizing

is the sensitive insights of the observer himself.” Both triangulation and the critical realist tradition of incorporating participants in the knowledge-making process were adopted to mitigate potential bias and subjectivity. Notwithstanding, reflexivity has become a complimentary part of critical theory processes given the extent to which it concerns manifestations of power (Macbeth, 2001). “Reflexivity leads the analyst to take up the knots of place and biography and to deconstruct the dualities of power and anti-power” (Macbeth, 2001: 38). The need to examine the researcher’s own position of power is, therefore, paramount.

I had trepidation regarding the selection of a research topic concerning impoverished rural black African women. I was cognisant that my position as a middle-class, urban, white man came with inherent limitations which would potentially compromise the depth of this research. The reflections were consistent throughout the course of this work, however, did not deter my desire to confront the injustices which pervade the lives of the most marginalised. Originally, prior to the proposal process, I wanted to engage with smallholder farming women through interview methodology. It became clearer, however, that my position would compromise my ability to understand the lived experience of smallholder farming women. I noted that the pursuit should be undertaken by another researcher; one more readily able to comprehend the lived experience of intersectional marginalisation experienced by black African smallholder women.

Thus, I turned my scope away from further understanding of lived experiences of smallholder farming women, toward the perspectives of third sector organisations and governance in an effort to facilitate positive change, in the best way I thought I could, given my own social position. Nevertheless, constant reflexivity was ongoing, and I remained cognisant of my position throughout the research process. By adopting further methodology, such as triangulation, and a critical realist paradigm, considered effort was also made to remain in control of potential bias or other shortcomings emanating from my socio-economic position, wherever possible.

4.12. Limitations

The following limitations arose during the course of the research:

i. Lacking Access to Participants

Although the researcher made extensive enquiries regarding the organisations and their staff prior to the research, and a positive attitude to participate was reflected in communication with these organisations, when it came time to conduct interviews various challenges arose. One organisation was on the decline, its gatekeeper was emigrating, which made accessing further participants a difficulty. Another organisation was between projects and many of their facilitators and farmer support staff were no longer available due to lacking funding and their being employed on an if-and-when-needed basis. Various other issues arose: participants were in the field, unable to make time for the interviews, or participants were on leave.

ii. Lacking Access to State Documents

Another limitation became apparent in this research and that was the accessibility of appropriate provincial governance arrangements. Governmental websites, especially at the provincial level, often lacked current policies, strategies, speeches and amendments. Although several attempts were made to contact relevant KZN departments via email and telephonically, little to no assistance was given. This limitation was mitigated via further investigation, and consultation with relevant academics and, finally, an official at the DARD informed the researcher of appropriate, recent arrangements in the form of SAT-KZN.

4.13. Delimitations

Due to multiple constraints, several delimitations had to be set to make this research timeous and feasible. All the gaps caused by these delimitations were filled, to the best of the researcher's ability, with the assistance of existing scholarship in the literature and governance review for a holistic consideration of the relevant phenomena.

i. Participant Range

It came to the researcher's attention during the proposal defence process, that greater scope and insight might be achieved by interviewing smallholder farming women and NGO staff. However, throughout the scholarship review and per further reflexivity, it was made clear that extensive research had considered the position of smallholder farming women in South Africa and the researcher was unlikely to contribute to this discourse with great efficacy. Extensive voice had also been given to food sovereignty small-scale farmers in general in academic discourse. Hence, and to garner a range of understanding of

competing narratives of third and public sector, and the challenges and potential of women smallholders in a food sovereignty context, third sector participants manifested the only key informants.

ii. Geo-political Range

Originally, the research aimed to undertake a study of food sovereignty, land and agri-food governance at a national level. However, due to the travel expenses and time constraints associated with undertaking field work in alternative provinces, it was clear a more localised study would garner similarly valuable results. Hence, this work focused on development and provincial level governance only. The scholarship review did, however, reflect the wider knowledge of agri-food and land governance at the national level and referred consistently to the food sovereignty, heterodox economic insight therein to provide the reader with as holistic a dissertation as possible.

iii. Disciplinary Range

Much of the basis for the success of food sovereignty relies on the extent to which its agroecological objective engenders environmentally sound agricultural practise. Given the disciplinary scope of this research it was impossible to fully appreciate the efficacy of NGOs' attempts to cultivate sustainable women empowerment relevant to environmental factors. Therefore, further transdisciplinary research to examine the extent to which the food sovereignty paradigm truly conforms to pro-environmental development it claims to facilitate, would be advantageous for a full view of its efficacy in the sustainable transformation of the food system.

4.14. Ethical Considerations

The following illustrates the extent to which the researcher ensured the ethical obligations of this research were upheld, and the steps taken to ensure the correct procedures concerning ethical considerations were adhered to. These considerations conformed to the regulations set by the University of KwaZulu-Natal Research Policy (2014: 7 – 8) and followed their guidelines of honesty and integrity, safe and responsible methodology, and fairness and equity for participants.

i. Safety and COVID-19

To ensure the safety of both researcher and participant, interviews were conducted in a suitable office environment on the non-governmental organisation premises or via the

virtual platform, Zoom. It must be noted that throughout the research process, including observation, all current COVID-19 regulations were observed by the researcher and participants. Updated regulations were constantly checked on the Department of Health website and the researcher was fully vaccinated prior to data collection.

ii. Management of Research Data

Findings, in the form of a dissertation, were made available to the broader research community. However, raw hard-copy data including field notes and transcripts were kept under lock and key by the researcher only. Digital data in the form of transcripts and audio recordings were kept in password protected folders by the supervisor and the researcher. Destruction and deletion of all data will occur following a period of five years.

iii. Gaining Access

Gaining access to the various NGOs above did not prove a challenge in this research. Firstly, a request for a gatekeeper's letter was drafted. This letter illustrated the topic of this research and reflected briefly upon what was expected in their being interviewed and noting that there was no obligation to participate. This did not occur, however, and all four gatekeepers exhibited a willingness and enthusiasm to participate in this research.

iv. Informed Consent

During the proposal phase of this research an informed consent letter was drafted according to the guidelines set by the Humanities and Social Sciences Ethics Committee. This informed consent letter indicated the parameters of an interviewee's participation in the research. Particular attention was given to explanation of the topic and noting the participant may refuse or withdraw from the study, and was under no obligation to reveal any information he or she did not want to. This letter was drafted in both English and isiZulu and issued to participants.

v. Anonymity and Confidentiality

Although the name of organisations could not be kept anonymous, the identity of participants was concealed with the adoption of pseudonyms. To garner further confidentiality, care was taken within the findings not to reveal the organisation a particular interviewee was affiliated with throughout the research process.

4.15. Conclusion

This chapter reflected upon the methodology employed in this research. Initially the reader was made aware of this work's paradigm, approach and design. The purposive sampling strategies used for NGOs, participants and policies were also illustrated. Thereafter the researcher discussed participant observation methodology, semi-structured interviews and document analysis. In do so, the reader was made aware of the data collection process undertaken by the researcher. Data analysis via grounded theory, thematic analysis and qualitative content analysis was illustrated. Finally, the chapter explicated the ethical concerns, delimitations, and limitations of the work, and the steps taken to mitigate them wherever possible.

Chapter Five: Data Analysis and Interpretation

5.1. Introduction

The following chapter illustrates the findings garnered from several semi-structured interviews and participant observation. Initially, the chapter reflects upon the objectives of this work and briefly recapitulates the methodologies employed. Thereafter, the reader is provided with a profile of the respective participants including the pseudonyms adopted to ensure their anonymity. Following that, findings and interpretation begins with a consideration of food sovereignty, both concept and praxes, in the landscape of third sector rural development operations in KZN. Particular attention is given to the initial development of the feminist food sovereignty framework. Findings indicate that while food sovereignty maintains a macro-transformative agenda, operations of third sector occur largely within micro food systems at household or community food pathways. These findings would, therefore, re-emphasise the importance of intra-household gender dynamics in ensuring equity and food sufficiency.

The following themes concern gender dynamics, and illustrate the critical, yet precarious, position of women in household and community food systems. It provides data to suggest that women maintain a central role in household and community food production despite a preponderance of socio-economic and political threats to their empowerment. Furthermore, this section considers two fundamental findings which would contribute to the theory construction necessary for the researcher's conceptual framework, that being the 'breadwinner paradox' and the identification of 'gendered predilections in commodity selection'. The final sections of the chapter consider the data associated with land and agri-food governance. Ultimately, it became clear that public and third sector narratives for rural development were in conflict. As a result, the efficacy of their efforts for a greater realised right to food are potentially compromised. To conclude, the reader is provided with a visual representation of the conceptual framework to be employed in the following Chapter Six to consolidate the dissonant narratives of third sector and state in land and agri-food governance.

5.2. Recapitulating Research Objectives: Chapter Five

It must be noted that not all respective objectives are to be achieved within this chapter in so much as they do not concern the augmentation of governance. This is the primary

purpose of the upcoming review of the SAT-KZN. Hence, only the following objectives were pertinent to this Chapter Five, which aims to:

- Consolidate the conceptual rigour of the feminist food sovereignty paradigm as a conceptual model for the benefit of governance critique and enhanced development praxes.
- Investigate the position of smallholder women in the food system and the intrahousehold, interhousehold and institutional arrangements hindering their enfranchisement for the benefit of gender equity and food sufficiency.

5.3. Recapitulating Methodology: Chapter Five

The following findings were garnered through the use of semi-structured interviews and participant observation methodology. In the vein of grounded theory tradition, the data retrieved from these procedures was analysed concurrently with ongoing data collection (Charmaz, 2008). It included coding procedures, with raw data from these codes separated according to the themes and subthemes illustrated below. Regarding reporting methodology, the quotes of respective participants are verbatim bar two caveats: for the reader's benefit, poor language use, for example profanity, has been omitted. Secondly, due to wordcount limitations, ellipses have been used between respective clauses.

5.4. Illustrated Summary of Categories, Themes and Subthemes: Chapter Five

The below reflects the categories, themes, and subthemes that were identified following transcription and analysis of data. These respective entities additionally reflect the order by which findings have been reported.

Table 2: Summary of Categories, Themes, and Subthemes: Chapter Five

Categories	Themes	Subthemes
Food Sovereignty	Thinking About Food Sovereignty	Food for People
		Values food providers
		Localised food systems
		Puts control locally
	Doing Food Sovereignty	Knowledge and Skills
		Working with Nature
Gender	Absent Man	Mining Influence
		Colonial Governance

		Clan Conflict
	Breadwinner Paradox	Gender Roles
		Normative Labour Divisions
	COVID-19 and the Breadwinner	Shifting roles
	Predilections in farming	Crops vs Livestock
		Cash Cropping vs Subsistence
Agri-food Governance	Welfare Mechanisms	Dependency
		Opportunity
	Extension Services	Invisible
		Incompetent
	Co-operatives	Failing Co-ops
	Decision-making	Smallholder Interests
Land Governance		Women's Interests
	Traditional Authorities	Maladministration
		Local Autonomy
	Permission to Occupy (Gender)	Patrimony
		Kinship Arrangements
	Permission to Occupy (Credit)	Private Ownership

5.5. Profiling Participants

To facilitate a transparent and systematic illustration of the data, while concurrently ensuring the anonymity of participants, pseudonyms were used. In the case of this research, participants' names have been replaced with a colour, proceeded by a respective title of Mr or Ms. Given the nature of this work's gendered focus, the researcher felt it necessary to continually illustrate the gender of participants. Furthermore, to ensure their greater anonymity, each organisation which participated in the research is identified via the use of a letter.

Table 3: Codenames for NGO's and Participants

NGO	Participant	Race	Gender	Age	Role
A	Mr Blue	W	M	50+	CEO
A	Mr Gold	W	M	50+	Chairperson
B	Mr Grey	W	M	50+	Project Manager
C	Ms Yellow	B	F	50+	Farmer Support

C	Ms Brown	W	F	50+	CEO
C	Ms Green	B	F	40-49	Research and Advocacy
C	Mr Purple	B	M	50+	Project Manager
D	Ms Red	B	F	40-49	Zone Manager
D	Ms Orange	B	F	50+	Project Manager

As apparent, the number of participants from each organisation differs as a consequence of the limitations noted in the previous chapter. However, in terms of demographics, participants are relatively evenly represented regarding gender and race. Moreover, the researcher was fortunate to garner insight from a diverse sample of development practitioners with extensive experience ranging from field work to upper-management.

5.6. Food Sovereignty

The first category concerned the initial conceptualisation and action of food sovereignty within the context of rural, agricultural development in KZN. Several open-ended questions were put to the participants including: (1) What does the concept of food sovereignty mean for you? (2) how might food sovereignty effect your beneficiaries? (3) how might food sovereignty effect women in the food system? The purpose of these questions was to begin conceptualising a food sovereignty which is contextually sound, and grounded in the transformation of KZN's food systems specifically. Additionally, the latter query began to examine the potential linkage between gender and food sovereignty. Hence, in conceptually developing food sovereignty, and specifically feminist food sovereignty, it was important to discern just how the concept is understood by its promulgators in the context of KZN rural development.

5.6.1. Thinking about Food Sovereignty

The literature review above (see Chapter Two, Part A) showed food sovereignty to be a term with ambiguous parameters, subject to shift according to context (Dekeyser, Korsten and Fioramonti, 2018). Indeed, the researcher found a diverse range of responses which would align with the insights of Dekeyser, Korsten and Fioramonti (2018), however, these were not without underlying pattern. It is pertinent to note that none of the participants gave a recognised definition of food sovereignty and all responses reflected original description. The researcher analyses the understanding of food sovereignty in the KZN context by comparing these definitions to the formal pillars of food sovereignty espoused in the Nyéléni Declaration (2007). These pillars provided the subthemes to be explored in

the initial conceptualisations and are as follows: (1) focus on food for people, (2) values food providers, (3) localises food systems, (4) puts control locally, (5) builds knowledge and skills, (6) works with nature.

i. Focus on Food for People

Focus on food for people refers to the right of peoples to “sufficient, healthy and culturally appropriate food for all individuals, peoples, and communities...and rejects the proposition that food is just another commodity” (LVC, 2016: 14). Participants reflected a commitment to this sentiment within their responses and consideration was made for the de-commodification of food, and access to healthy food. This is best illustrated in the below quote by Ms Brown:

“I suppose food sovereignty is speaking to things like healthy, nutritious food, access to food, availability...It is something speaking to the right to food and it is a human rights approach. It’s not shaped by profit or corporate agenda.”

The sentiment aligned with the heterodox economics associated with food sovereignty and the pillar of focus on food for people. Ms Brown makes explicit reference to the right to food, as opposed to food security, or food sufficiency. She acknowledges a humanist approach to ensure this right, and directly averts from the neoliberalism associated within current food systems and scrutinises profit-seeking, corporate agri-business. The findings would directly conflict with the governance arrangement under scrutiny; the Strategy for Agrarian Transformation KZN:

“Previous focus had been on food security at a subsistence level. This focus has not led to enhanced development of the agricultural sector and assisted to boost the sectors contribution to the GDP of the province and the country. It is therefore imperative for DARD to radically change the approach to agricultural development. The DARD has thus decided to take a new path using an approach that had worked in commercial agriculture; farming as a business for profit.” (SAT-KZN, 2015: 31).

The belief of the food sovereignty advocate and the governance understanding of agriculture as merely a form of business for profit, rather than a mechanism to ensure the right to food, are somewhat opposed. The dissonant narrative between third sector

regarding a focus on food for people, and state agenda for commodification of food, forms a valued element of the conceptual framework within the context of KZN rural development and is expanded upon throughout this and following chapters, specifically, the effect of these respective binary agendas upon smallholder women.

ii. Values Food Providers

The emphasis upon the role and centralisation of food producers forms the second pillar in the understanding of food sovereignty. LVC (2016: 14) consider that “food sovereignty values and supports the contributions of women and men, peasants and small scale-family farmers...and rejects those policies, actions and programs that undervalue them, threaten their livelihoods and eliminate them”. Participants reflected a similar regard for the concept of food sovereignty and, consequently, showed a direct focus upon the role of small-scale farmers and a profound aversion to threats to their position in the food system. The finding would align insights of Carlile, Kessler and Garnett (2021), in so much as food sovereignty advocacy, although diverse, maintains a consistent emphasis on the empowerment of small-scale farming over industrial agriculture. Indeed, throughout the interview and participation process, it became clear that development practitioners held small-scale farming in high regard as having transformative potential in the food system. However, it was noted by the researcher, that a particular emphasis was additionally placed upon the value and decision-making power of the consumer in several interviews. This can be viewed in the following statement by Mr Purple:

“...to have food choice. You eat what you want to eat, you don’t eat what you don’t know, you grow it locally, you share it with the community, you improve your livelihood through techniques and you live in harmony with nature.”

It was reasonable to interpret Mr Purple’s conceptualisation of food sovereignty as fundamentally concerned with the rights of both the consumer and the decision-making power of the producer. Mr Purple goes even further in so far as he blurs the distinction between the producer and the consumer. Reference to the consumer and producer as a single agent engendered an emphasis on the micro-food system, and specifically the role of subsistence farming; farming first as a means of feeding yourself. Indeed, such a bottom up approach to consolidating food sufficiency, beginning at the household level, became particularly apparent in KZN’s third sector praxes.

iii. Localises Food Systems

This finding would interconnect with food sovereignty as being concerned with shortening the gap between producer and consumer and providing them with greater means of control over a more nuclear food system. It includes an opposition to governance and operations that facilitate adverse influence upon a food system which may “give power to remote and unaccountable corporations” (LVC, 2016: 14). The emphasis of food sovereignty advocacy was upon the individual, household and community level, and the means to ensure the autonomy of these micro-food systems rather than the national. This was viewed most clearly in the view of Mr Grey when asked what he believed food sovereignty meant for him:

“the ability for a community, a person or a group, to have the means, and wherewithal to manage a sustained source of food for themselves, and their homestead, or community. Where you have the ability, through effort, to feed yourself without the adverse effects of difficulty accessing markets or lacking capital.”

Indeed, findings suggested that localisation in the context of food sovereignty discourse in KZN is less so a matter of radical shift in the broader food system but rather an effort for self-sufficiency; in short, negating the wider food system and focusing on subsistence at an individual, household or communal level. The concept of a localised food system which operated at such a micro-level of individual or household proved a significant finding within the development of this conceptual framework: If food sovereignty’s localisation is considered, first, as an individual, and household matter, then the gender dynamics around food, and between individuals within that household become even more pertinent. The researcher argues that taking this ‘micro-view’ or ‘grassroots-view’ of food sovereignty allows a concept which prioritises household food sufficiency and takes into greater account the reality of transforming the food systems by first transforming household dynamics around food. In this regard, feminist thought found cogency with the *modus operandi* adopted by food sovereignty.

iv. Puts Control Locally

Food sovereignty emphasises autonomy, and the ability, specifically, to self-govern a localised food system. For LVC (2016) this means control over the resources associated with food production and the right to define their localised food system. For food

sovereignty in the context of the interviewed participants, two forms of autonomy were considered, individual choice, and community agency. The emphasis upon individual choice was often considered by participants and can be reflected in the following statement by Ms Yellow:

“It [food sovereignty] means I must have the right to food, healthy and sustainable living and have my choice. So, I shouldn’t be forced to take what I don’t need. I must use the things that will give me a better life and a better future and a healthy life.”

Ms Yellow’s use of the word ‘force’ was of interest to the researcher in so much as it implied resistance against external, hegemonic capital or state influence on food systems. A similar focus upon individualist sovereignty, and resistance to compulsion by external entities, can be viewed in the response by Mr Blue:

“If you talk about food sovereignty, or water sovereignty, you’re effectively talking about resting control of those who control you. That is effectively what you’re talking about when you talk about sovereignty: You are in control as an individual.”

This finding diverts somewhat from the perception of food sovereignty as predominantly a community, provincial or even national effort, to an individual action for autonomy, and resistance to oppressive entities within the food system. It became clearer that the manner in which this was to be achieved was by, firstly, consolidating the household food system through subsistence farming. The implication is that one may maintain individual food sovereignty even if the broader surrounding system is still beholden to outside external, hegemonic influence. This bottom up approach, can be viewed clearly in the following by Mr Purple:

“...you start by feeding yourself before you go out and help others... to start with, you have to have healthy food on your plate, and for your family.”

The interpretations of the participants above show an emphasis on food sovereignty at a micro-scale food system, emphasising the autonomy of the individual, and the household. However, these conceptualisations do acknowledge that boundaries are

permeable, and shifting elements of micro-food systems may be shared within the wider community. The responses, therefore, showed a legitimate commitment to a bottom-up approach of small-scale farming, however, with recognition that the approach, although focused upon micro-systems, had the potential to consolidate the wider food system. The same *modus operandi* was found in the respective interventions undertaken by the organisations.

5.6.2. Doing Food Sovereignty

The last two pillars espoused by LVC (2018) concern the practise of food sovereignty. This section will show that development was diverse in practise and organisations differed considerably in their operations. Indeed, the researcher observes that despite their being conceptual uniformity amongst organisations which all align to the pillars of food sovereignty, their practises and respective emphases differed more significantly.

i. Builds Skills and Knowledge

Knowledge and specifically indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) received varied emphasis by organisations. It became clear, however, that participants held a considered appreciation for traditional methods of production, processing and storage and aimed to build upon the skills and knowledge of their beneficiaries. The following statement by Ms Green, additionally, shows how this appreciation differs from the strategies of state:

“Incorporation of indigenous methods and learning from that. And, a farmer-oriented approach to support, from the knowledge people have and then build that, not say ‘it’s bad and should be forgotten’. Build innovation onto the farmer knowledge... even if the state changed its approach to validate what people know on the ground, or used to know, so it’s not entirely obliterated.”

Multiple participants also acknowledged that IKS surrounding food threatens to be degraded, manifesting a direct hindrance to food sovereignty. Mr Purple, who grew up with traditional methods of farming, believed in the efficacy of these mechanisms, and reflected a desire to continue them, leading him to become involved in the organisation:

“I grew up with family farming whereby we needed to grow our own food. So, I went to study agriculture at the college. And, after being trained, I found myself very un-useful to the family farmers that I was deployed to because I

was telling them to use chemical fertiliser and pesticides. But they didn't have that money, they couldn't even afford to test fertilisers. But then I remembered at home we never used that. I only saw it for the first time at the college. I grew up with what is normally called agroecology that's mimicking nature and working with nature."

The insights were valuable for a feminist food sovereignty framework: Given women's monopoly over IKS around food, as acknowledged by Asogwa, Okoye and Oni (2017), the greater emphasis upon the centralisation of IKS by third sector means greater attention to the role and potential of smallholder farming women. Hence, food sovereignty's agroecological praxes aligns more readily to the pursuit of gender equity. Moreover, an introduction to a shortcoming in state to capitalise upon this knowledge was introduced by acknowledging that policies are potentially misaligned to the financial capabilities of smallholder women to afford chemical inputs.

ii. Works with Nature

Across organisations emphasis was placed upon a sustainable development practise. A point of considerable diversion amongst third sector strategies was the extent to which the principles of agroecology were adhered to. Some participants advocated only agroecological methods amongst their beneficiaries while others took a laxer view, especially, in the form of inputs such as chemical fertilizer and the use of pesticides and herbicides. Some organisations were, however, vehemently committed to minimising the need for inputs and ensuring that they "never use any of the chemical fertilizers, we never use any pesticides but the food is there, its growing plenty" (Mr Purple).

It remains clear that, given the autonomy associated with food sovereignty, it is potentially counter-intuitive to provide support to farmers under the proviso that they are barred from using any adverse chemicals or genetically modified crops. In short, the author argues it could be potentially hypocritical for any organisation to espouse food sovereignty, and the enfranchisement of smallholder autonomy, while threatening to withdraw support should a farmer choose to adopt alternative modalities. As noted by Dekeyser, Korsten and Fioramonti (2018: 7),

"the assumption of the FS movement for agroecology disregards the limited choices that force peripheral producers into labour-intensive agriculture and

ignores the capacity, or willingness, of conscious farmers to choose other production methods.”

The researcher considered this and made comparison with an alternative organisation. For one organisation that meant taking a macro-view of surrounding environmental dynamics. Alongside their development of heirloom seed nurseries, and establishment of gardens, was the removal of invasive species, erosion control, and working in conjunction with pro-environmental groups. Specifically, the organisation reflected a strong commitment to seed banking and environmentally sound water management (Field Notes, August, 2022). In fact, the upper management of the organisation noted that they are steering away from using the term agroecology:

“our terminology has kind of changed over the years. If we had to re-name it now it would have to be more of a ‘regenerative agriculture’ where we are really looking after the land better, and improving the land.” (Mr Gold).

The findings would reject the sentiments of food sovereignty advocates, echoed by Martinez-Torres and Rosset (2014), that “food sovereignty without agroecology is hollow discourse.” Rather, the organisations and participants in the research showed a commitment to food sovereignty while conforming to a range of diverse practises which, nevertheless, emphasised sustainability, harmony with nature, conservation or environmental regeneration.

Furthermore, Field Notes (July, 2022) reflected the concept and practise of agroecology manifested a point of rift between organisations. The indication, therefore, is that agroecological practise in so far as it defines the boundaries of what can be considered food sovereignty advocacy, is potentially exclusionary. Field Notes (July, 2022) showed that two of the organisations, both operating in KZN, both underpinned by food sovereignty, had no contact with each other despite their being headquarters being located less than 200 meters away. Furthermore, Field Notes (July, 2022) illustrated a sense of scrutiny between organisations:

“X reflected an element of arrogance when referring to other NGOs. X considered [organisation name] to be a particularly committed food sovereignty, agroecology organisation...considered other organisations to

almost co-opt food sovereignty/ agroecology, while not using agroecological methods.”

Indeed, there remains a considerable lack of co-operation between NGO's operating in the agri-food, rural development space in KZN. Only a single opportunity for NGO's to congregate in KZN was available throughout the observation period (Field Notes, August, 2022). Moreover, participants were aware of a distinct lack of association between third sector and state entities. Mr Grey noted:

“There's a need to fast track ourselves and work closer together across sectors with more inclusive synergy. Everyone is competing with each other in the agricultural sector...Everybody should be working with each other for a common goal, listen to each other, having forums amongst NGOs and across sectors.”

These findings suggested a desperate need for collaboration among NGOs and with state within the landscape of rural development, despite possibly divergent views on agroecological practice. A lack of such synergy likely compromises the greater transformative potential of these organisations and their efforts. The author considers that if the similar narratives of third sector cannot compel their collaboration, then positive co-operation across sectors, with state, is unlikely.

Finally, the extent to which agroecologically grown food would be preferred amongst consumers was questioned. Ms Green, specifically, noted how agroecologically grown, household-produced food was not always favoured over processed food. This was made apparent, particularly, amongst children in the household:

“So, I think with advertising and everything I think people aspire to the McDonalds and the KFC. And then, it's that very manipulated taste that's designed to hook you. So, when you go back and mom's food is bland because they don't use a lot of spices and salt and pepper. It's actually delicious but if you've now become accustomed to processed food.”

These findings would align with the concerns of Kesselman, Ngcoya and Cassale (2021) whose work in Johannesburg showed that dietary preference was potentially misaligned

with agroecological produce. It is unclear, therefore, how the practise of agroecology, as a pillar of food sovereignty, will be able reconcile consumers' own autonomy to choose food they prefer rather than what an advocate may consider 'culturally appropriate' as per the Nyéléni Declaration's (2007) definition of food sovereignty.

5.7. Characterising the Smallholder Woman

Women's role as the primary food producer in the household was acknowledged unanimously amongst participants, and their role in agriculture was considered in such terms as 'critical' or 'central' or 'crucial'. All organisations noted that they worked predominantly with women (between 60% and 95%) as women made up the majority of farmers in their respective sites. Participants were then asked why women formed the majority of food producers. The purpose of this query was to ascertain how the dominant role of women in their household and community food system was grounded at the base of the feminist food sovereignty framework. The following themes arose:

i. The Absent Man

A reason for women's predominant role in agriculture was, simply, that men were less prevalent in rural communities. Several examples were provided across interviews for men's exodus and the subsequent feminisation of agricultural labour. The fundamental role of women in food production was perceived to be the result of male emigration and, in this regard, mining was noted as a profound pull factor. Furthermore, the advent of external economic pressures for men to gain a cash income, such as hut tax, was considered a significant historic push factor.

"For me, I think it was because farming was taken as the duty of women because, if you are thinking of way back, men were not staying at home, they were working in mines and then maybe come once a year. Women were the ones looking after the household, doing the chores, including the farming." (Ms Yellow).

"Traditionally the amabutho [male amaZulu soldiers] would till the land, the men, because it was hard work. Since the mines have been sucking them out of the community, it has become a woman's job." (Mr Blue).

Ultimately, the theme of the absent male in the agrarian setting, as a result of mining, would recur as a primary reason for women's position in smallholder farming in KZN. As considered by Mr Blue, this was not always being the case, and prior to the growth of industrialised mining, the gendered labour division around household food production was less clear-cut. Thus, external economic pull factors were considered to have potentially disrupted the traditional labour divisions which characterised agricultural production.

Moreover, push factors engendered by colonial rule were also recognised as historical reasons for men's absence. The finding aligned with Magoqwana's (2018) assertion that colonial and racial governance greatly disrupted gender dynamics in the country and further subjugated black South African women. This can be viewed in the data provided by Ms Brown, who identifies colonial influence and policy, particularly hut tax, as a factor leading to men's absence:

"It's also the hut tax, people had to work to get money and men went to the cities to get money and women remained behind."

Hut tax refers to the enforced payment of 'tax' per dwelling by the British colonial government in 1849 (Ndlovu, 2017). While hut tax was initially payable in either cash or produce, as further labour was required in mining and industrial agriculture, cash became the exclusive method of payment. Consequently, men were induced to seek paid labour away from their own homesteads (Ndlovu, 2017). The racial asymmetries associated with hut tax, and colonialism in general, additionally ratify the use of intersectional analysis in analysing women's predominant role in agriculture today.

However, contemporary factors arose which ensured the continuation of the absent man in rural households. An example was found in interviewing Ms Red, whose main project operates around the Msinga/Tugela Ferry area of KZN. The area has long been associated with intense inter-clan violence. As a result, Ms Red observes,

"...previously we know that in Msinga there were fights, there were all those things, and then most of the men died during that year, then most of the women operating in our irrigation scheme are widowers".

It is clear, from the perceptions considered above, that several reasons caused women to become the predominant food producers in their respective communities. The researcher argues, therefore, that increasing out-migration by males, as was viewed in Camlin, Snow and Hosegood (2014) in their study of rural KZN, and the policies which helped sustain it for the benefit of capitalists, according to Marxian interpretation, cemented women's position in agrarian life in KZN. However, this proved the first challenge to the conceptual development of feminist food sovereignty. The above phenomena all point to women's role in smallholder agriculture as being the result of external factors, either maladroitness policy, or the decisions and preoccupations of men. In other words, according to participants women did not necessarily choose to adopt the role of food producer, but were indirectly compelled to do so by the actions of men. Given the consideration of food sovereignty as fundamentally concerned with value for the food provider, individual autonomy, and choice over one's food system, it is difficult to reconcile the contradictory nature of these elements if women had no choice in the matter, a bedrock of feminist thought.

ii. The Breadwinner Paradox

Notwithstanding the factors which led to women's predominant role in agriculture, they often manifested the primary breadwinner in the household. Following a question asking why the majority of their beneficiaries were female, participants were also asked to describe the role of these women within their households and in their communities. It became clear from the responses that women, through their agricultural production, manifested the primary breadwinner in the household. The researcher posits that these findings turned the preconceived gendered notion of men as fulfilling the role of breadwinner on its head. This is illustrated by Ms Green:

“Culturally it falls to women very often to provide for their families and certainly with the women we work with. A lot of them have come into the food production space because they need to provide and they don't have cash which causes their interest in producing food”.

The understanding of women as breadwinner is largely paradoxical given the extent to which masculinity, and the ability to provide for one's household, are longstanding gender norms. However, further discussion evoked a clear pattern concerning work ethic, and women beneficiaries' particular determination to ensure food sufficiency. In short,

smallholder women were considered to have a formidable work ethic, while men were considered either 'lazy' or generally unwilling to engage in household food production. In reference to one of his organisation's projects, which involved both men and women, Mr Grey said the following:

"Women always came more often and worked harder than the men. The men would arrive at their own time and moan and groan. Work ethic for women in smallholder farming is definitely higher... ladies complain less and are more appreciative."

Indeed, a consistent remark across the majority of participants concerned the immense workload of smallholder women and their desire to ensure their families' wellbeing. These responsibilities, over and above farming, included childcare and grandchild care, fetching water and fuel, agro-processing, cooking and cleaning, and venturing to markets to sell their produce. There is argument to be made for the extensive responsibilities caused by gendered household labour divisions as a hinderance to the smallholder women's ability to play a greater part in community food sovereignty, outside of household food sufficiency:

"A whole lot of responsibilities; you're keeping the whole household running so their days are already long and they don't have time to go look for markets, to have meetings, to see where they could sell or even go to town...so they would really like to see youngsters interested in marketing for them... that's where I think people could come together, where it makes sense to aggregate the selling part and not the production." (Ms Green).

"They don't get time to rest, they are doing everything, all the time. So, they need to think of all their families, they put them first before them...from the morning to the night, the woman doesn't rest. She will have all the duties she has to do in the household and at the same time thinking of how to take care of this family and how to take care of the kids and the grandchildren. Everyone in the household, she is thinking of them. Even if there are kids who are working, when they come back from school or from work they know that mama is home so they are not worried about what they are going to eat. But, for her,

she needs to think of everyone in order for this household to survive.” (Ms Yellow).

Time constraints were viewed consistently as a fundamental challenge to smallholder women and as a potential hinderance to their further ability to ensure wider food sufficiency. Moreover, as noted by Mendoza et al. (2020) the agroecological methods associated with food sovereignty are both time and labour intensive. It would be important, therefore, to acknowledge the extent to which agroecological methods may, in fact, compromise greater food sufficiency given the already time constrained smallholder women. To mitigate this challenge, participants frequently mentioned the involvement of youth in agriculture and family food production as a way to enhance livelihoods and relieve some of the workload of smallholder women.

However, despite this central role in sustaining the household, women were considered marginalised at the household, community and provincial levels of these respective food systems. Such insights concur with those of Mubeca and Njoyezi (2019) who highlight the marginalisation of black African smallholder women in rural contexts. Concerning the micro-level, women’s control over their household food system was precarious, although, multiple participants noted that this varied from family to family according to the gendered dynamics therein. However, evidence did suggest that the level of control held by men was a potential threat to the smallholder women and compromised her ability to engage with structures which may enhance her potential as a change agent for food sovereignty in the greater food system.

“So sometimes what happens is that the women do really well, and start bringing in income, and then there can be conflict between the husband and we have had one family where the husband started forbidding the person to go and attend meetings etc, because he felt threatened that she was becoming more independent.” (Ms Green).

Mr Purple also noted the double standard which characterises household decision-making around food:

“A man can sell without asking a woman, or his wife, but she has to ask”.

Thus, it became apparent from the participant's observations that women are considered responsible for sustaining the household despite longstanding gender expectations. However, this responsibility did not necessarily equate to decision-making power, emphasising the necessity for a redress of intra-householder gender dynamics offered by feminist food sovereignty. Alternatively, the patriarchal intrahousehold dynamic will continue to dictate and constrain smallholder women from acting as autonomous change agents of greater transformative potential within their respective food systems.

iii. COVID-19 and the Breadwinner Paradox

However, findings suggested that when men were obliged to engage in agricultural production this dynamic altered and COVID-19 offered the setting for this observation. It was interesting to note how COVID-19, and particularly regulations obliging men particularly to cease work and return to their homes according to lockdown protocols, effected food sovereignty. The work of Ngcoya and Kumarakulasingam (2016) would indicate that the men's greater presence in the household was a hinderance to women's farming practices through a man's greater control over his partner. However, findings in this research conflict. From the participants' perspectives, when men do return from to their rural homes, kinship relations regarding food production shifted positively toward more shared labour. Specifically, the advent of COVID-19 and associated lockdowns obliged men to return to rural homesteads, their labour, along with the economic pressures applied by COVID-19, encouraged positive relations around food production. As noted by Ms Yellow:

"No one was allowed to be anywhere, we were all at the household. Even those who were not supporting farming were engaged because you can't sit at home for the whole day and do nothing and you also see the results of farming. When mama is coming home from the field, she is bringing something and then we prepare it and we eat as a family. So instead of them going and sitting together as the men and doing whatever they do together, now they need to spend more time within the household and experience how it is to be at home. But, I think also of the role of the women, she will get relief by them because now she has more hands and more support from the family. Some of the household duties are now shared."

Further research considering shifts in kinship dynamics around food production as a result of COVID-19 would be advantageous and greater insight into the effect of the 'present' or 'absent' man upon household food sovereignty is required. However, it is clear from the observations of Ms Yellow, among others, that when obligated to return to domestic settings, predetermined and asymmetric labour divisions may have altered toward a more egalitarian mode of household food production. Although the insights of third sector reflected a positive linkage between male presence within the household and a home's food sovereignty these findings conflict with those of Ngcoya and Kumarakulasingam (2016).

The insights find greater congruence with the work of Bezner Kerr et al. (2018), in so much as their work observed the extent to which gendered labour divisions may be adapted by third sector for the benefit of smallholder farming women. Bezner Kerr et al. (2018) noted how men might be encouraged to share this labour resulting in greater gender equity and food sufficiency. Consequently, the need to emphasise gender dynamics as being imperative to greater household food sufficiency is clear.

iv. Gender Predilections in Agricultural Production: Livestock

As such, it became clear, in analysing the gendered dynamics of smallholder farming, that there exists a gendered dichotomy within community and household food production: Women smallholders were more inclined to farm crops for household subsistence while men were inclined to engage in livestock and cash cropping for income. This recurring sentiment made apparent that even within small-scale farming, choices of what to farm, why to farm, and how to farm are gendered. Several reasons arose for men's predilection towards the farming of livestock. These included the traditional gender roles around agricultural production in rural KZN which saw men as culturally responsible for herding and tending livestock. As one participant noted, livestock, and cattle specifically is associated with an outward exhibition of a man's status.

"She will focus on putting food on the families table where the husband will focus on possibly growing the herd, which is never sold and never slaughtered for food because 'there's my wealth'." (Mr Blue).

It was apparent that intersections of status and gender influenced the organisation of the food systems in rural KZN, specifically regarding commodities, and the gendered

predilections surrounding these commodities. Unfortunately, as Mr Blue notes, the emphasis and management of livestock arguably compromises a greater realised right to food given that livestock offers less potential for food sufficiency than vegetable cropping. The gendered selection of agricultural commodities, and the normative gender roles associated with masculinity and expression of wealth are, therefore, considerable factors in ensuring the greater right to food. Moreover, several participants showed the poor management of livestock to be a considerable threat to women's farming production. Livestock wandering had a severe effect upon smallholder women's operations, including lost crops as can be viewed in response of Ms Orange:

"Let's say you are growing cabbages and your area is not well fenced and there are livestock farmers and no grazing camps or a shortage of fodder. When the cattle or goats see there is cabbage they will just rush in and all your investment is gone. It's mostly men who farm livestock."

The phenomena can also be seen in the following note by Ms Green:

"In the areas we work, it's still quite patriarchal in many cases, and production is divided according to cultural norms, so, women do food growing, vegetables, and growing, whereas men deal with livestock."

It was clear the observations considered how gender norms effect choices of what to farm and therefore, how they directly affect the potential to realise the right to food. Additionally, it was found that despite the greater potential of women to ensure sustainable food sources through vegetable production, community power structures have failed to facilitate it: Traditional authorities were perceived as less likely to revoke communal grazing rights in an effort to preserve these crops, proving a major challenge to women smallholders despite fencing efforts and traditional protocols associated with managing livestock in rural KZN.

"It is the conflict of interest that most of the livestock are wondering, not being looked after, and the farmer that is growing food is being vandalised by these livestock. Also, the bylaws are not protecting them in terms of production...The bylaws will not protect that particular woman, it's easy to lose your crop to livestock. And, they will say, 'you must fence your land to keep the animal

away' which is opposite to what we grew up knowing which was you must herd the cattle, take the cattle away from the fields and leave the fields alone for cropping and for food." (Mr Purple).

It was clear, therefore, that the gendered dichotomy in commodity selection potentially compromises the critical role of the smallholder women. The argument that traditional mechanisms for agricultural production have been eroded at the expense of smallholder women is apparent. Findings, therefore, aligned with Sachs (2019: 5) who acknowledges the existence of 'gender/species power relationships' which may dictate a gendered division of agricultural labour. However, governance arrangements, specifically in regard to traditional authority, have failed to effectively acknowledge and mitigate their hinderance to food sufficiency and gender inequity.

v. Gendered Predilections in Agricultural Production: Cash Crops

Not only was the choice of commodity gendered, but evidence from third sector development practitioners indicated that reasons behind farming followed a similar pattern. In this regard, men engaged in agricultural production for the purpose of income while women saw agriculture as a means of family subsistence. Consequently, men were more inclined to select cash crops, such as sugarcane, maize and beans while women selected a diverse range of vegetables.

"Also, in some families, men also see agriculture in terms of cash cropping, that's their preserve, while women are doing the household food production. So sometimes what happens is that the women do really well, and starts bringing in income, and then there can be conflict between the husband." (Ms Green).

Ultimately, the understanding was that men's priority was to cultivate an income rather than ensure food sufficiency, and when this gendered expectation was compromised, it caused an element of conflict. A similar gender division can be viewed in the following:

"You find that men are more interested in crop farming, like growing maize and also growing sugar cane. Women will be more interested in vegetable production... in terms of income men are more interested in getting money and

women are more interested in feeding their family and selling the surplus.” (Ms Orange).

As stated simply by Mr Purple:

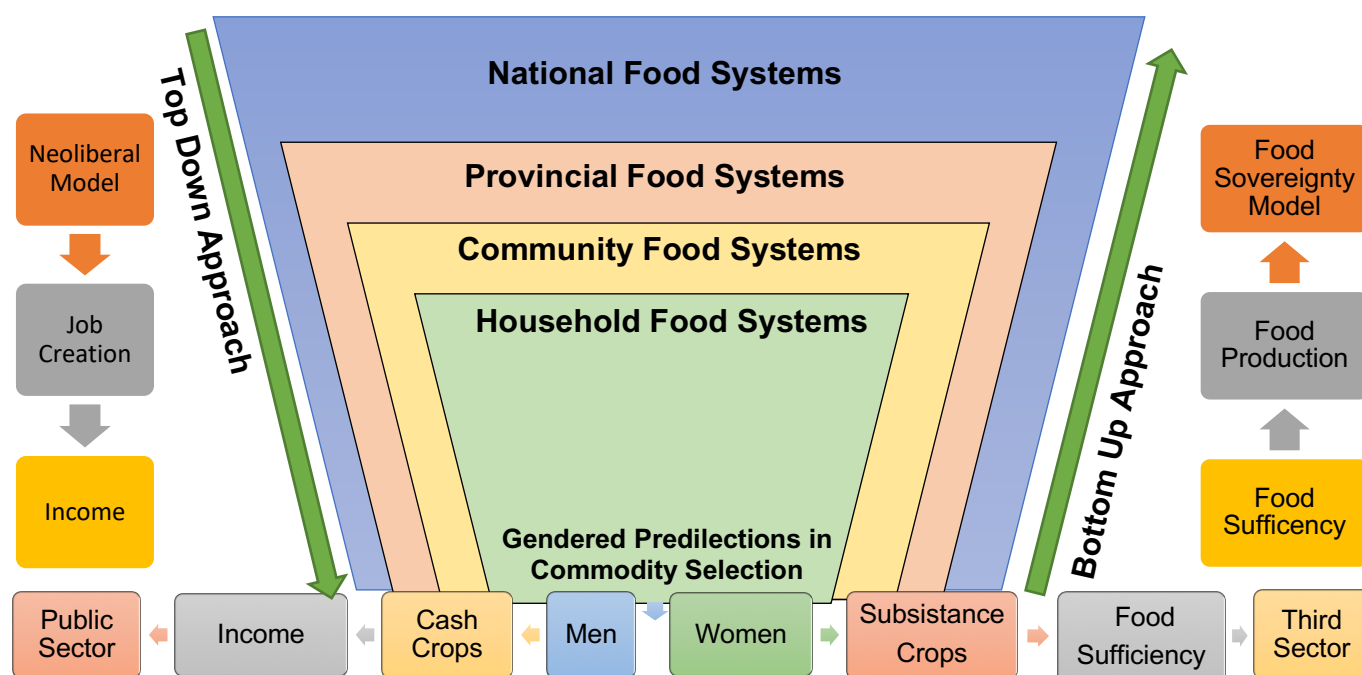
“Men think more of income, women think more of food security.”

Because of the household and community scale at which NGO's operate, this division meant another influencing factor in their greater interaction with women farmers. Moreover, it shows a gendered rift in NGO/food sovereignty strategy, and state strategy. While women concern themselves with agriculture as point of food sufficiency, men's predominant interest was in cash cropping for income. In reviewing SAT-KZN (2015), agriculture as a source of income rather than food sufficiency aligns more closely with men's predilections, concurrent with state strategies and governance, than that of the third sector. As will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter, the neoliberal inclinations of governance views agriculture as a source of income, a business, over a source of food. This can be viewed again in the following quote from the SAT-KZN of what food production entails:

“Agriculture in its basic form is a business where the farmer buys inputs, uses these inputs with her/his skills, knowledge and abilities to produce a product that he/she sells to a market place.”

It is clear, therefore, that state takes a highly industrial view of agriculture, and neglects the subsistence farming which women, and third sector, predominantly emphasise. Moreover, it is clear that cash cropping skips the household food system, the strata in which women and third sector primarily operate. The finding concerns the quote by Park et al. (2015) in Dekeyser, Korsten and Fioramonti (2018: 8) “to assume that all rural women would choose (small-scale/family) farming as opposed to engagement with corporate agriculture is quite a leap of faith”. The researcher posits that it is not so much a leap of faith but a reality of patriarchal food systems, and, while such patriarchal systems and deprivation continues, so will these gendered predilections in farming. The phenomenon of gender predilections in farming and how they align with the dissonant strategies of third sector and national and provincial state can be viewed in the below diagram.

Figure 4: Gendered Commodification in Agricultural Production and its Relation to Conflicting Third and Public Sector Paradigms



(Researcher's Compilation, 2022)

5.8. Women and Agri-food Governance

The following section begins to examine the interconnection and contradictions associated with food sovereignty, women, and agri-food governance. In garnering the below, several questions were put to participants including: (1) How do your projects align or divert from state strategies and interventions? (2) Do you believe current state strategies and policies are successfully supporting women in the food system? And, (3) what is required in governance for the empowerment of smallholder women farmers in the food system? It was apparent that the predominant opinion held by the participants reflected a disparaging view of governance arrangements and their ability to empower the smallholder woman. The following responses were given when asked whether interviewees felt state was effectively supporting women farmers:

"No..."

"Well, the easy answer is no..."

“No, no, no. It does not...”

“I wouldn’t say yes...”

Several themes would arise which provided further detail as to how agri-food governance was affecting their beneficiaries. These included: welfare mechanisms, extension services, facilitating co-operatives, conflicting models in agriculture, and a general inability for governance to account for the interests and abilities of women farmers.

i. Welfare Mechanisms

Regarding the extent to which third sector considered welfare mechanisms as supportive of rural women, responses reflected the view that social grants, in the form of pensions and child support specifically, had a mixed effect. Participants noted that they do potentially cultivate a greater reliance on government, however, were aware that for many, they were a necessary buffer against economic crisis:

“I think it really helps with the worst conditions. I don’t know if there weren’t any [grants] more people would be growing but I’m sure more people would need something to fall back on.” (Ms Green).

For some, such as Ms Green, welfare mechanisms provided a valuable safety net for her beneficiaries in times of difficulty. This insight would concur with Kirsten (2017), who noted that the grant system does play a critical role in buoying food sufficiency during times of crisis. However, despite the consideration of social grants as an arrangement which cultivates dependency upon government and, therefore, compromises food autonomy, Ms Orange reflected a balanced response with an unexpected advantage:

“Other farmers, women farmers that we work with, it helps them to expand their economic opportunities in agriculture but others simply just depend on the social grant so it has a good side and a bad side.”

In the case of Ms Orange’s beneficiaries, social grants manifest a more complex dynamic than is often perceived. While dependency is evidently a concern, grants also acted as a means of gaining the capital necessary to expand their farming operations, and, therefore, potentially facilitates a greater process of food sovereignty. These insights divert from the

suggestions of Pereira (2014: 5) who considers that social grants “undermine the ability of households to invest in household food production” and lead to greater supermarketisation, thus, conflicting with the underpinnings of food sovereignty. Therefore, the researcher considers the view that social grants fundamentally threaten food systems and smallholder farming is a potential over-simplification of the complex socio-economic dynamics associated with welfare mechanisms.

ii. Extension Services

A consistent critique of governance was its failure to ensure adequate extension services for smallholder farmers. The findings, vis-à-vis incompetency of extension services, would align closely with the sentiments of Malatji (2019). Indeed, either extension officers were absent or, alternatively, the agroecological methods espoused by third sector conflicted with state strategies. For Mr Gold, extension officers were hard to come by;

“I haven’t come into contact with a single extension officer in all the years we have been working out there. I have heard about them handing out seeds and fertilizers and things like that but I’ve never actually seen one with my own eyes.”

Ms Orange noted a similar phenomenon in her observations of extension support in areas around KZN:

“The old department of agriculture was visible on the ground and used to visit farmers, there were vet services and extension officers who were very much active and there were budgets that were allocated. You find, these days, all of those are not visible on the ground.”

Furthermore, in cases where extension services were being rendered, the state’s *modus operandi* surrounding small-scale agricultural production conflicted with the agroecological methods implemented by third sector. An example can be seen in the statement by Ms Green in response to a question of how their projects align with, or divert from, state initiatives:

“It’s very different and we’re quite often in conflict. The extension gets to the know the farmers and they know they mustn’t offer to come and give things to

these farmers because they are not going to want them...for example fertilizers or GM seeds or hybrid seeds, our farmers will turn down...like they just give out the stuff and don't have the training to handle that diversity, or that diverse production."

Moreover, Mr Purple takes a highly critical view of the role extension services play in the food system and considers the governance arrangement to be based upon interests other than those of the smallholder farmers themselves:

"I don't think the government extension officers are working for the community. I think they are working for the investors...working within the government using taxpayer's money pushing outside packages and ideas of farming... but actually, the local farmers are there, and have been producing for themselves and they are neglected."

Ultimately, this would ratify the adoption of an elite theory, and, it became clear across organisations, according to the perceptions of NGO members, that the extension arrangement is largely failing to support smallholders. These findings align with those of Witt (2018) in his view on the impact of governmental agricultural and rural development policy on smallholder farmers in KZN. Beyond concern for their efficacy, it is apparent there remains trepidation surrounding the maladministration of extension services for the benefit of external capital rather than smallholders.

iii. Co-operatives

State strategy, as viewed in the SAT-KZN (2015), is often to facilitate co-operatives for greater market power. However, many participants were wary of co-operatives, especially the effect they have upon women. The findings would concur with the quantitative research by Sinyolo and Mudhara (2018) which indicated bias against women in co-operatives. Brief responses from this research indicated that:

"...forcing people into co-ops was really a terrible thing." (Ms Green).

"...co-ops don't work." (Mr Grey).

Mr Grey gave an analogy of a co-operative which, at first, involved both men and women. However, “men caused too much trouble”, especially when it came time to ‘cash up’, this caused women, in an action of considerable empowerment, to take matters into their hands. They appealed to the traditional authority and, resultantly, formed a co-operative of their own:

“The women segregated themselves because the men didn’t focus enough on the requirements and tended to be the people to collect the cash come market time and didn’t invest the cash in savings or a plan scheme...women seem to be better at saving and planning. The men caused more trouble because they tended to want to use the cash on things that weren’t critical and that caused friction.” (Mr Grey).

Men were less willing to place more back into the co-operative and re-invest money for inputs. Eventually, this caused women to leave the co-operative and farm independently with one another. The particular work ethic and spending patterns of women would come up often in later interviews. Moreover, Mr Grey also assessed the social advantages of women co-operatives. They provided support and facilitated social ties amongst often vulnerable women and the implication was that women were able to build a safe social network for themselves, away from an often-subverting household dynamic. A similar anecdote can be found in the work by Satgar and Cherry (2020) who reflected upon the case of a women farmers group in Detroit. The sentiment is reflected in the following quote from Ms Red:

“I’m not sure but I’m thinking that if women are given an opportunity to work in co-operatives, but they form a woman’s co-operative, excluding the men. Within the same irrigation scheme, we have co-ops and we say these are women co-ops only.” (Ms Red).

However, further research is required in examining the dynamics surrounding co-operatives and specifically gendered co-operatives. Notwithstanding, given the conflicting purposes of farming (cash crops vs subsistence) it would not be unlikely to suggest co-operatives may always be effective given the respective goals of men and women farmers. It is apparent, however, that facilitating co-operatives, although a longstanding strategy for rural development, requires rethinking.

iv. **Conflicting Models**

From the perspectives of NGOs, the underpinning model employed by state was fundamentally in conflict from their own *modus operandi*. Generally, the primary emphasis for NGOs was upon securing food sufficiency at a household level, taking a bottom up approach to agriculture. Conversely, the provincial department of agriculture and rural development maintained a neoliberal focus on job creation, income and economic upliftment. The diversion can be viewed in the following statement by Ms Brown:

“They might have policies to support smallholders but it is not with food sovereignty in mind, and more from an economic perspective. So, in many ways we have more aligned with the Department of Health, than the Department of Rural Development. Agriculture is not necessarily talking to food but business. So, I think if you’re looking at food sovereignty one is looking at food, if you’re looking at agriculture, its commercial gain and it’s not necessarily going to be healthy, culturally appropriate food.”

The reference to the Department of Health reflected the extent of the misalignment between the DARD and the third sector. In short, it came down to the what participants viewed agriculture to be, for them, a source of food, while for provincial government, a source of economic development, employment and income. This is particularly clear in reviewing the alternative key performance indicators (KPIs) of state verses civil society. The difference between NGOs and their modalities dictated the extent to which civil society methods conflict with state agenda. Notwithstanding, all organisations reflected recurring concerns. These included an over emphasis by state on job creation over a focus on realising the right to food. As noted by Mr Grey, this conflicting agenda has caused some discrepancy in the actions of an NGO funded by the state and private sector:

“They don’t necessarily say we’re looking for advances in agriculture, they might just say here’s a whole lot of money, you decide on the specific sector you want to go into...we came up against that, and it also includes private sector funding, they want a turnaround for their expectation and they want their KPIs to reflect jobs; KPI’s I measured in jobs. People have got a turnaround for their expectation and that’s usually in jobs. Most of our funding came

through government, for us to look at employment opportunities in industries. But that's hard with agriculture."

One participant was vehement that state policy was inherently flawed in its effort to ensure a better food sufficiency and general upliftment through an emphasis on cultivating industrial agriculture for the purpose of job creation:

"It's a myth that large scale farming is going to save the world from food insecurity. That's nonsense. Big business will never create jobs, only lose jobs and big business in agriculture is losing jobs." (Mr Blue).

It became apparent, therefore, that a considerable disconnect lay between the NGOs and state agendas concerning agriculture in the province. Facilitating industrial agriculture, rather than being viewed as a means of enhancing food sufficiency and rural upliftment was seen as a shortcoming in state strategy. Across organisations the model of industrial agriculture, cash cropping, was viewed as unsuccessful in achieving sustainable development. Rather, as noted by Mr Purple:

"you start by feeding yourself before you go out and help others... cash crops are the end part of it. To start you have to have healthy food on your plate for your family."

The conflicting strategies of state and third sector are stark, the former a top-down commodity approach, the latter a bottom-up subsistence approach, and the implications thereof for policy and women, will be discussed in the upcoming Chapter Six.

v. Interests of Smallholder Women

Responses concerning the challenges faced by women smallholders, and the extent to which governance has mitigated them, showed a consistent acknowledgement that power structures have failed to account for their interests. Several interviewees would argue that women lack decision-making power within institutional governance. Rather, the perception, in multiple organisations, was that government interventions and policy were designed with the interest of private investment in mind. Responses ranged from a moderate view of state's lacking incorporation of the voices of smallholders, to the belief

that a conscious effort has been made to marginalise smallholders for the benefit of industrial agri-business.

“It feels as though there are lots of potential threats to smallholders and rural people, that the policy environment is not really protecting them and giving them opportunities. Now I’m thinking of markets as well, everything is structured to make it really difficult for farmers to have easy access to local markets.” (Ms Brown).

“They [corporate agri-business] have systematically destroyed small farmers, that’s been a target, and they’ve worked with government because money talks. Simple as that.” (Mr Blue).

Regarding smallholder women specifically, multiple interviewees believed that governance has failed to adequately reflect the interests of smallholder women or provide them with the necessary platform to engage in decision making. Ultimately, this was considered the consequence of smallholder women’s voice being neglected in decision-making spaces.

“In Msinga, culturally, mostly men have a voice than the women. That’s what I can say. That it’s a disadvantage for them, because, their voice, it’s not heard by men. If the men say that goes, then that goes with the man’s voice.” (Ms Orange).

“I know in communities there are community meetings because they are involving everyone, which is also a challenge when talking about gender. Because, usually when there are those meetings, people expected to speak or voice out are the men, as the head of the family, now they are seen also as the head of the community. And, the role of the women doesn’t have a voice in that manner.” (Ms Red).

Although these responses considered women’s voice in local decision making, it became clear that participants had similar views on provincial governance.

“IDP strategy says it takes account of the voices of the people, it has workshops and talks etc but all it is a bunch of consultants and politicians talking TO the community, they never listen.” (Mr Blue).

For those respondents who observed that there was some provincial policy regarding the interests of women, a belief in their efficacy was dubious. One respondent noted a disconnect between what a particular policy required and what her beneficiaries were able to achieve:

“So that’s a problem, they need to be organised and capacitated to have a stronger voice. To make it easy for them to access funding from government because you need to create a business plan, how can you tell a woman from Msinga who is illiterate to prepare a business plan?” (Ms Yellow).

It is clear, therefore, that state has potentially neglected to create a reasonable platform that accounts for the voices and abilities of smallholder farming women particularly.

5.9. Land Governance: Permission to Occupy

Across all organisations, land governance manifested in the form of permission to occupy (PTO). PTO is a form of land arrangement whereby a traditional authority, either amaKhosi or Induna is responsible for the allocation of land in communal areas for a family’s cultivation or occupation. Throughout all the areas in which the participants operated, the Ingonyama Trust was the governing body to which the traditional authorities responded. This introduced a new variable for the researcher to contend with in conceptualising food sovereignty and gender dynamics in rural KwaZulu-Natal. Therefore, participants were asked to explain this land arrangement, how it affected their beneficiaries, and how it affected women smallholders specifically. Participants were additionally asked how such arrangements could be modified for the benefit of smallholder farming women. Consequently, several themes emerged, including; maladministration by traditional authorities, patrilineal custom, intrahousehold conflict over land usage, and access to credit.

i. Maladministration by Traditional Authorities

As viewed in the work of Buthlezi and Yeni (2016) and Aardenburg and Nel (2019), scrutiny of traditional authorities on grounds of malfeasance is not novel. However, the

effects of this phenomenon in the context of food sovereignty is yet to be fully discerned. The researcher found three examples of maladministration by traditional authorities which threatened food sovereignty.

“...there is a big cry now...for seeds to be distributed to the community, but they never reach the community. The traditional leaders will use that first. And, with mining, the investors will go to the traditional authority and leaders will make deals on behalf of the community but it is not on behalf of the community, it's on their behalf as the council.” (Mr Purple).

Coercion by mining companies became a recurring sentiment among participants and one participant acknowledges how this manifested a direct threat to food sovereignty:

“And, it's getting worse I think. Because, you know that the Traditional Bill has given more rights to traditional authorities to make decisions and you can have indunas giving away land to a mine and thereby undermining a whole community, their sovereignty if they want, and that is the case.” (Ms Green).

Furthermore, indunas were also accused of selling land allocated to beneficiaries:

“The Induna is physically selling plots to people outside of the community for personal gain.” (Mr Blue).

The alleged maladministration by traditional authorities also extended to the kickbacks afforded to them. Unfortunately, one participant reflected upon how this compromises the livelihood and access to land of her beneficiaries:

“When you go to pay allegiance to Induna to ask for the land, sometimes you need to bring like a bottle of alcohol or a crate of beer. If you don't have money to buy that beer it puts you in a difficult position.” (Ms Orange).

It became evident that the traditional authorities exhibit a lack of transparency and malfeasance in their governance of land which may compromise food sovereignty. However, traditional authorities also manifest potential change agents for community autonomy and, therefore, greater localisation and local decision-making power. Given that

the limitations noted above could be mitigated through private ownership, the finding that private ownership was not overtly encouraged was curious.

However, notes from participant observation (September, 2022) made it clear that one organisation had cultivated a positive relationship with traditional authority in the field. In this regard, the traditional authority, in this case an Induna, played a vital role as a gatekeeper and liaison between the NGO and their beneficiaries. During the period of participation, a new project was being rolled out by the organisation, the Induna and the CEO of the organisation had something of a positive relationship which, ultimately, assisted in the project's upstart (Field Notes, September, 2022). Thus, although there remained critical views on traditional authorities' ability to foster food sovereignty, they maintain a position, outside of state, for access to a community in need of development.

ii. Permission to Occupy and Gender

Notwithstanding, PTO, and the patrilineal customs associated with traditional authority, pose a formidable threat to the position, wellbeing and enhancement of food sovereignty and smallholder women. Participants consistently noted issues of gender discrepancy within access to land, and, following the death of a husband, continuing to occupy that land. The phenomenon can be viewed in the statement by Mr Purple:

"If she wants land outside of her family property, she will have to have a son to get the land. And, if she is not married, as well, she will not have the land. No son, no marriage, no land."

This was echoed in the statement by Ms Orange:

"You know, in the rural areas, the access is to men. If you are a woman, it is difficult for you to obtain land, so you need to hide behind a man for you to get land...even the traditional authority, we find even when they provide land, most of them are not keen to provide land to women."

Women smallholders, despite their profound role in sustaining family and community, continue to experience discrimination in access to land. In some instances, women could not access land unless through a male family member. However, women's access to land was not only blocked by traditional authority, but traditional kinship arrangements around

land proved an equal threat to women's autonomy and empowerment. This can be viewed in the lack of decision-making power women experience in regard to household land usage which was illustrated by one of several anecdotes from Ms Green:

"...and there has also been some issues, like the one old lady, she was single and she had to get land through her brother so she didn't have security of tenure for her because the brother could change his mind at any time...she also had tended her farm for years and years and years and then he suddenly decided he wanted the land to put up shacks to rent and just kicked her off. She had no rights, she tried to go to the traditional authority, she tried all sorts of things, but he just took the land."

Patriarchal kinship dynamics like the example above were frequently considered and, mostly, in terms of land arrangements following the death of a husband. It became apparent that women were in danger of losing their land if they were to become a widow, as can be viewed in the statement by Ms Yellow:

"It is better if that family farmer doesn't have the in-law relative close by, because, when we are talking about the land, it also goes back to the gender issue that men are in control of everything that is happening in the community. So, my husband can leave me the land, but if there are in-laws that are his family then they can claim that is their land. My land is theirs. Because there is a belief that when you are a woman and you are getting married you don't have any wealth within that family."

It must be noted that although the majority of participants had observed land-gender inequity, a minority had not found it an issue amongst their beneficiaries, and this was found to be the case in Msinga (Ms Orange). The implication is that traditional authorities are not a monolith, and kinship arrangements differ according to context, however, are worthy of concern as a threat to the empowerment of smallholder women.

iii. Permission to Occupy and Credit

Despite ambiguous consideration of PTO, and its effect on beneficiaries, a recurring theme was the inability of PTO to allow for access to capital required to facilitate greater production for food sufficiency. Mr Purple had the following to say on the matter:

“They can only use it [the land], so they cannot guarantee investment in that property. This is very bad because even if you wanted to do something bigger and if you wanted to grow, you have limited land. Like some of our farmers want to grow seed bulking but they do not have enough land to do that. So, they are limited to have access to seed, and if you have got limitations to access to seed then you have limited access to food.”

Mr Purple considers PTO as a limiting factor in the expansion of smallholders for wider food sovereignty. Specifically, the inability to own the land means his beneficiaries are unable, or unwilling, to invest in land that, which, fundamentally, does not belong to them. Similarly, Mr Grey had the following to say:

“I think the permission to occupy works and doesn’t work. It’s easy to do, you go to the chief, you ask for your land, he signs a piece of paper and that’s it. Looks and says, ‘yes that’s fine or that’s set aside for grazing’ etc... difficulty is most financial institutions won’t give you capital because you don’t have tenure. I’m not sure yet though if you can get capital without say, a 99-year lease.”

Mr Grey brings forward a similar limiting factor, however, he acknowledges that PTO also compromises the ability of smallholders to feed the wider community due to lacking the tenure required to gain a loan. Unfortunately, governance has evidently failed to ensure the recognition of PTO as a secure land arrangement. Ms Green had the following to say regarding the interconnection of traditional authority and state:

“There are pros and cons to different arrangements, and that’s what I think is the problem, because we have rights and then we have traditional rights and where they intersect is very fuzzy. And, it’s getting worse I think, because you know that Traditional Bill has given more rights to traditional authorities to make decisions and you can have indunas giving away land to a mine and thereby undermining a whole community, their sovereignty if they want, and that is the case.” (Ms Green).

Ms Green raises a point of land sovereignty, which is insufficiently considered alongside research pertaining to food sovereignty. She views traditional authority as having the power necessary to undermine both if they act in disregard of the needs of their constituents. Ultimately, unless all sectors and stakeholders are able to acknowledge traditional means of land arrangement in policy and development, the empowerment of smallholder women is likely compromised.

5.10. Conclusion

The chapter began with the conceptual development of food sovereignty within the context of KZN. Findings suggested a uniformity in the understanding of food sovereignty, as a bottom up approach, underpinned by a humanist agenda, to ensure autonomy and consequently the right to food. Notwithstanding, doing food sovereignty reflected a diverse range of practises which, nevertheless, maintained a concerted respect for IKS and sustainable agricultural praxes. Thereafter, the role of gender was discussed and findings showed that due to reasons for women's being the predominant position in agriculture, autonomy was compromised. However, women were viewed, largely, as the household breadwinner and central to household survival. Thus, following sections of the chapter considered means of mitigating threats to smallholder women's empowerment, with a particular scrutiny of land and agri-food governance according to NGO members.

Chapter Six: Governance Analysis and Interpretation

“The answer is simple and straightforward, everything we do in the department, every one of our efforts is concentrated on women economic empowerment...we realised that if we wanted to transform agriculture in the province and ensure that it becomes a catalyst for economic growth, we would have to unleash the power of our women subsistence farmers...as part of our Strategy for Agrarian Transformation, KZN DARD has taken a number of bold steps to invest in our women farmers.” (Cyril Xaba, MEC for the DARD, Women Economic Empowerment Summit, 2016).

6.1. Introduction

Little evidence would validate the sentiments of Mr Cyril Xaba regarding the centralisation of women in provincial agri-food governance. The Strategy for Agrarian Transformation in KZN (SAT-KZN) makes no mention of women, a gendered perspective, or account for the central role, and formidable challenges of women smallholders. However, the SAT-KZN aspires to a “rapid and fundamental change in the relations (systems and patterns of ownership and control) of land, livestock, cropping and community” (SAT-KZN, 2015: 23). Hence, the following chapter examines the potential for this aspiration to be better realised without taking a gendered view into account. Thus, the intersectional, feminist food sovereignty framework is employed to test its credibility and offer alternatives in governance for gender equity and food access.

To maintain a holistic food systems analysis, the chapter’s deductive themes were guided by the five principles of Termeer et al.’s (2018) diagnostic framework which included: (1) system-based problem framing, (2) adaptability, (3) boundary-spanning structures, (4) inclusiveness, (5) transformative capacity. Within these over-arching categories, the feminist food sovereignty framework is imbricated as a mechanism for governance analysis and interpretation, engendering a dialectic with the findings of the previous chapter. The resultant findings illustrate the efficacy of such a framework in achieving a just food system regarding gender equity and a better realised right to food. Firstly, the chapter will reflect upon SAT-KZN, its policy context, principles and programs will be noted. Thereafter, a diagnosis of food systems governance arrangements shows recurring incongruence between the state strategy for agrarian transformation, and the modus

operandi adopted by third sector, engendering recommendations for enhanced policy and development praxes.

6.2. Recapitulating Research Objectives: Governance

Following Chapter Five, the below objectives manifest the intentions of this governance critique. Research objectives extended and tested the feminist food sovereignty framework, and explicate the viability of feminist food sovereignty as a mechanism for pragmatic change in policy and development praxis. The following chapter aimed to:

- Test the contextual applicability and theoretical efficacy of the consolidated feminist food sovereignty framework as a mode of critique.
- Offer valuable recommendations to policy and development praxis to enhance the position of smallholder women in the food system for greater equity and food sufficiency.

6.3. Recapitulating Research Methodology: Governance

Following the critical realist grounded theory methodology associated with the previous chapter, the research was obliged to adopt new, deductive methodology in examining the SAT-KZN. Thus, and in an effort to achieve triangulation for greater validity, multiple forms of data analysis were employed. Firstly, the data was retrieved directly from the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) website. Following that, thematic analysis, and to a lesser degree qualitative content analysis were employed in so much as recurring themes of concern were coded from the raw data. Coding, and analysis were guided by the deductive use of Termeer et al.'s (2018) diagnostic framework and imbricated by the feminist food sovereignty framework. Ultimately, this encouraged triangulation, ensured findings adhered to a systems analysis, and offered valid recommendations for the augmentation of provincial agri-food governance arrangements.

6.4. Illustrated Summary of Categories, Themes and Subthemes: Chapter Six

The following table illustrates the categories, themes and subthemes which pertain to this chapter.

Table 4: Summary of Categories, Themes and Subthemes: Chapter Six

Categories	Themes	Subthemes
System-based problem framing	Production	Employment Emphasis
		Jobs vs Food

	Processing	Smallholder Autonomy
		Localisation
	Consumption	Food as Commodity
		Right to food
Adaptability	Technocracy	Technology and extension
		Resilience
	Consolidation	Co-operative building
Boundary-spanning structures	Public Sector	Inter-departmental
	Private Sector	PPPs
	Third Sector	Integration
	Joint Ventures	Potential Exploitation
		Farmer Autonomy
Inclusiveness	Women	Gender considerations
		Gender challenges
	Smallholders	Didactic inclusion
		Decision making
Transformative Capacity	Rectifying Dependencies	Welfare mechanisms
	Resources: Land	Land reform
	Smallholder women	Governance ingenuity

6.5. A Critical Overview of the Strategy for Agrarian Transformation

South Africa's agrarian, rural governance may be contextualised according to three distinct phases (Olivier, van Zyl, and Williams, 2010): 1994-2000, 2000-2009, and 2009 onwards. SAT-KZN, in line with the increased prioritisation of rural upliftment associated with the Zuma administration (Olivier, van Zyl, and Williams, 2010), falls into the latest category. It is within this policy context of a prioritised rural development agenda that the strategy should be viewed. In doing so, a narrative arises which exemplifies a more erudite understanding of government's aspirations for agrarian transformation, and therefore, the extent to which a provincial arrangement may be considered 'transformative' or otherwise repetitive.

SAT-KZN reflects a congruence with the agendas associated with the policy environment of the last decade rather than being something of an outlier. Several arrangements influenced the SAT-KZN, not least of which was the NDP, but also include the Medium-Term Strategy Framework (MTSF), the Provincial Growth and Development Strategy (PGDS), the Rural Development Framework (RDF), and the Agricultural Policy Action Plan (APAP). The above governance arrangements concern themselves with a range of interconnected issues, including food security (food sovereignty is without reference in SAT-KZN), employment, land reform, poverty eradication and sustainable development. The legacy of this broad approach to agrarian policy is well evident in SAT-KZN which takes an ambitious view of agrarian change. As such, the strategy, signed off for implementation on the 01 April 2015, provides an overarching exemplar of current modalities employed by provincial government in approaching agricultural transition. The broad scope, although daunting for the researcher, provides a valuable exemplar of the governance attitude toward various aspects and levels of the food system from land reform, to production, agro-processing and consumption. Such a holistic arrangement engenders a rich source of data for food systems analysis.

In overview of the arrangement, its parameters were designed around a highly neo-liberalised modality, largely attempting to ensure a shift from subsistence farming, to greater profit and commodification of smallholder produce. The conflicting aspirations between this approach and that of third sector illustrated in the previous chapter is made clear in the following:

“Previous focus had been on food security at a subsistence level. This focus has not led to enhanced development of the agricultural sector and assisted to boost the sectors contribution to the GDP of the province and the country. It is therefore imperative for DARD to radically change the approach to agricultural development. The DARD has thus decided to take a new path using an approach that had worked in commercial agriculture; farming as a business for profit.” (SAT-KZN, 2015: 31).

To realise the above, the strategy bases itself on four foundations reminiscent of the green revolution’s perspectives of enhanced production via technological advancement and increasing commodification. At its base is an emphasis on scientific research, technology development and extension. Thereafter, a commodity approach and business model look

to the arrangement of farming and value chain access, the neoliberal elements of which engendered significant criticism from the feminist food sovereignty perspective discussed in detail below. The final foundation for the SAT-KZN, is the use of an agro-processing model which seeks to enhance the remunerative potential of smallholder farming.

Figure 5: DARD Approach to Agrarian Transformation



(Source: SAT-KZN, 2015)

These foundations underpin the programs promulgated within the governance arrangement: (1) The land reform support programme; (2) the agri-village programme; (3) the river valley catalytic programme; and, (4) the agricultural communal estate programme. These programmes encourage the incorporation of otherwise independent farmers in larger entities, referred to in the strategy as 'communal entities' or 'business entities' for greater profit returns. The strategy emphasises the potential role of private capital in managing these entities, encouraging their link to more lucrative value chains. The arrangement takes little notice of the social repercussions associated with these programmes, and focusses its attention upon the potential economic outcomes of such an agrarian change. In noting the views of McIntyre (2018), the NPFNS' emphasis on commodification of food and competitive production, it is clear that little change in this metanarrative is observable in SAT-KZN.

The strategy concludes with a discussion of the funding models employed to encourage the success of the above and the approach to up-skilling farmers in the food system. The funding model incorporates three assistance packages; the household production, the community investment and the commercialisation package. The foremost, offers beneficiaries a means of household food production, including laying hens, vegetable gardens and value adding. Ultimately the goal of this program is to encourage, not only household food sufficiency but graduate farmers to small, medium and micro-enterprises (SMME's) and communal estates.

At a community level, funding is provided for infrastructure, veterinary services and land care. For communities to receive the necessary funding for the above, a business plan is mandatory. Similarly, receiving the commercialisation package requires a thorough business plan, and the provision of equity to ensure a loan partnership. Ultimately, these arrangements provide a mechanism for further commercialisation, encouraging agricultural business from a household, to communal, to commercial level. Throughout, the arrangement reflects a continued emphasis on economic growth, job creation, contribution to GDP, commodification of food, and a pursuit for profit. The intersection of food sovereignty, gender, and land within these modalities is discussed.

6.6. System-based Problem Framing

System-based problem framing examines the extent to which the governance arrangement has taken a system's view in its design and maintained a multi-dimensional view of the issues it aims to address (Termeer et al., 2018). I.e, has the arrangement been sensitive to the various repercussions associated with its implementation; drivers and feedback loops which may potentially compromise a different element of the food system? Indicators for an effective arrangement based on systems problem framing include; (1) *taking a multi-dimensional view of the issues the policy aims to confront, and how they are confronted;* (2) *remaining cognisant of an integrative narrative and;* (3) *the existing and potential feed-back loops associated with the arrangement.* The following themes were catalysed by paying attention to these indicators to understand the extent to which SAT-KZN has adhered to system-based problem framing. The integrated narrative was examined according to the three fundamental processes in food systems: production, processing and consumption.

i. Production: Employment Emphasis

The focus of the SAT-KZN (2015) is arguably characterised by a unidimensional view of what a successful food system, and effective policy, should manifest. To the greatest extent, the primary concern of the strategy for production is increased employment and commercialisation rather than focus upon enhanced food sufficiency, access, health or the right to food. A food sovereignty insight contradicts such a unilateral view of a food system, reduced to a source employment rather than an interconnected entity whose main role is to fulfil the right to food. Indeed, in referring to the findings of Chapter Five, it was clear participants were aware of this, and used it as a means of access to funding required to do the work they deemed more profound. This can be viewed in the following statement:

“There is a huge focus on the box ticking in terms of jobs, we use that as an excuse to get into the field to do this work. So, with government, I will use this project to get the message of food sovereignty and cultural and water sovereignty across.” (Mr Blue).

This proved to be the case, and in analysing SAT-KZN, the success of the food system is almost viewed in terms of how many jobs it creates instead of how many people it feeds and could potentially feed. The phrases; ‘job creation’, ‘employment’, ‘labour’ and ‘unemployment’ feature some 51 times in the entire document, while any reference to ‘food’ or ‘food insecurity’ or ‘food security’ is mentioned only 27 times. The final sentences in the conclusion of the document are telling in so far as they make no reference to food security, sovereignty, the producer or consumer, or the right to food:

“The DARD has taken large strides over the last number of months to develop a new strategy to change agriculture in KZN in line with the mandates from both National and Province. The implementation of this strategy with the agriculture development policies of DARD will enable growth and development in the sector as a whole and create jobs.” (SAT-KZN, 2015: 41).

Somewhat ironically, the SAT-KZN (2015) is fully cognisant of the extent to which agriculture is becoming an increasingly inviable mechanism for employment. Several graphs appear within the document illustrating the increasing size of commercial farms, alongside the decreasing number of farms. The document notes that as commercial

farming becomes ever-more central to the food system, and as mechanisation increases, jobs have been continually scarce.

“The decline [in farms] has been accompanied by a commensurate increase in the average farm size, and a change in the technology mix on farms. In short, as farms grow larger, they tend to rely less on labour...the overall trend has been one of job loss.” (SAT-KZN, 2015: 10).

It is concerning that DARD, fully aware of the increasing unemployment associated with commercial farming, would prioritise food systems as sources of job creation and attempt to achieve such an aspiration by encouraging further commercialisation. From the food sovereignty perspective, it is unlikely to be achieved:

“It’s a myth that large scale farming is going to save the world from food insecurity. That’s nonsense. Big business will never create jobs, only lose jobs and big business in agriculture is losing jobs.” (Mr Blue).

It is clear that the food sovereignty agenda conflicts fundamentally with that of provincial governance regarding the unilateral purpose of agricultural production. The former aims to procure the right to food, the latter to create jobs and confront unemployment. Furthermore, the concern remains that there is a trend of women’s disenfranchisement associated with increased commercialisation of agriculture. Literature is clear on the exploitative gender trends within the commercial farming sector, and in commercialised farming men make up the majority of fulltime employees (Loubser, 2020; Wanjiru, 2021). The financial security associated with fulltime, year-round employment is noted. For women, however, evidence would suggest that they represent the majority of part-time, seasonal workers and less likely to gain formal employment. This further relegation, to a precarious mode of employment, is less likely to enhance rural women’s position, if employment is able to be increased at all given the current trends.

ii. Processing: ‘Cutting the Middleman’

SAT-KZN (2015) provides a strategy for the extension of the role of smallholders in the food system through entrance into greater agro-processing. The term agro-processing in the policy context refers to the “converging primary agricultural products into other commodities and products for the market” (SAT-KZN, 2015: 21), such as butchery of

livestock, or packaging of vegetable produce. The strategy aims to encourage smallholders to engage in these value adding processes for a fuller return on their produce and greater benefit within the value chain. The research found a congruence with this arrangement and the insights of the food sovereignty advocates interviewed above. The following responses were garnered when participants were asked to describe women smallholder's role in agro-processing:

"It's better to generate something than to get it along the way, so, if they are the ones who have started producing food then also same with processing; they are the ones taking that next step of 'this is what I have grown, how am I going to process it'. They are there." (Ms Yellow).

However, there were challenges associated with smallholder women's involvement in agro-processing, and these included a lack of literacy, training, capacity and equipment.

"And just another thing and that is processing. So that's quite a big challenge, so even with our farmers they grow their own maize but it's difficult to process and its either by hand or the equipment side, there's not enough small-scale equipment... but, otherwise, people tend to eat their maize when its fresh and not grinded to meal. So that's a big problem, people could be far more food secure." (Ms Green).

Despite the concurrent agreement that greater enfranchisement in agro-processing could enhance the smallholder woman, and facilitate greater food sufficiency, a further challenge concerns the level of education and skills held by the potential beneficiaries of an agro-processing program:

"I will say it depends on their level of literacy and the availability of equipment and how to handle that equipment. These women here can produce a few juices from their vegetables and fruits but they don't have the facilities and capacities to produce it at large. But if they were given a chance, and especially the youth, those are the people who could push it, and make it their living." (Mr Purple).

Unfortunately, and despite the lost potential to empower smallholder women, only one participant mentioned having seen any implementation regarding such an intervention. The participant, Ms Red, identified an increase in agro-processing amongst her beneficiaries following intervention in October this year (2022). Therefore, it is apparent that both state and third sector see the benefit of encouraged agro-processing in localising the food system as a mechanism for empowerment for smallholder women. Further effort on behalf of third sector and state to expand upon training and equipment for processing purposes was also viewed as an effective strategy for enhanced food sufficiency and resilience.

iii. Consumption: Food Verses Commodity

Emphasis on employment and profit over the right to food has clearly influenced the choice of commodities which the state aims to encourage smallholders to grow. However, a lack of system-based problem framing potentially threatens to further both gender inequity and food insufficiency. The state takes a 'Commodity Approach' based off the APAP which "provides a guide on the various commodities that should be focused on in KwaZulu-Natal and the Department shall be guided by it and the following factors when choosing specific commodities of specific areas" (SAT-KZN: 17). Ultimately, the understanding of a food system, and agriculture as a source of economic growth, and job creation would conflict fundamentally with the view of third sector in so far as their first consideration is cultivation to ensure the right to food. The consequence thereof can be viewed in the following statement by Ms Brown:

"In many ways we have more aligned with the department of health, than the department of rural development. So, agriculture is not necessarily talking to food but business. So, I think if you're looking at food sovereignty one is looking at food, if you're looking at agriculture, its commercial gain."

The radically different ways of looking at the food system, and the purpose of agriculture, is a fundamental incongruence which affects which commodities are farmed, why they are farmed, and who is farming them. It is likely, in noting the resultant framework of Chapter Five, that smallholder women will likely benefit least from the modalities and underpinnings of state strategy due to men's predilections in agriculture, access to cash crop commodities and the greater land required to farm such commodities. The research selected a case study area, that had been discussed within the interview process to

illustrate how this governance arrangement may adversely affect women smallholders: the Umzinyathi District Municipality.

State has identified the following commodities for Umzinyathi, including: sugarcane, maize, soybeans, chicory, vegetables, pecans, kiwi fruit, avocados, potatoes, timber, pine, wattle and gum and pastures such as eragrostis, kikuyu and ryegrass. Other commodities include: beef, sheep, dairy and game. The vast majority of these commodities, cash crops, livestock, pastures, timber etc were all found to be the particular interest of male farmers in the previous chapter. An interviewee who works in Msinga, which can be found in Umzinyathi, had the following to say regarding women's role in smallholder agriculture in the area:

“they [women] are the ones who farm in Msinga mostly, sending those vegetables, mostly they are dealing with vegetables. I think they play a big role because they are the ones that are responsible for a high percentage of the vegetables available in Msinga for other people to come and buy.” (Ms Red).

Crops selected by state on the basis of their ability to create jobs or economic development rather than serve localised community need is cause for several concerns. Firstly, the decision-making autonomy of the consumer and farmer is compromised, her need, and knowledge over the best crops and her ability to farm those crops is overlooked. The process of farming is, therefore, alienated and her skill and autonomy overlooked. Secondly, the selection of niche crops based on their potential for commodification directly benefits male farmers over female farmers due to their respective interests and the gender discrepancies with regards to larger access to land. Lastly, the issue with reducing food down to a commodity, a product for capital growth rather than an innate human need, negates the intimate and individual relationship human beings have with their food, as a human right, according to the food sovereignty perspective.

6.7. Adaptability

The following category refers to the manner and extent to which governance arrangements are able to manoeuvre and shift when confronted with changes associated with the agri-food system (Termeer et al., 2018). In this regard, attention was paid to how the arrangement may react flexibly to internal and external factors, specifically socio-ecological, which may arise. Termeer et al. (2018: 88) consider several indicators, such

as effective monitoring systems, and self-organisation which may assist in identifying the ability of the arrangement to “respond flexibly to inherent uncertainties and volatility in non-linear systems.” The following themes and subthemes showed a diversion between state and third sector in their understanding of how to facilitate adaptability in a volatile food system.

i. Technocracy

Fundamental to the SAT-KZN, is the use of scientific research, technology development and extension services, all of which can be identified at the base of the strategy illustrated in Figure 5. Ultimately, the arrangement emphasises novel technology and technological methods as a means of achieving adaptability within agri-food governance. This can be viewed in the following excerpt from SAT-KZN (2015: 16):

“Research and technology development play a very important role to be able to establish new technologies in this ever-changing environment. New technologies and theories need to be tested to establish the predicted results and to form the basis for scientific founded extension. The extension services need to be on top of the latest technologies to enable to take the technology and translate it into an understandable message for the farmers so that they are able to incorporate the latest technologies in their farming practises.”

It is apparent that the state’s emphasis on achieving adaptability within their governance arrangement is to rely on the latest technology to mitigate precarity in socio-ecological shifts. The sentiment is highly congruent with the neoliberal philosophies and modus operandi of the green revolution from which food sovereignty diverts. Moreover, evidence would suggest that the aspiration has failed given the level of criticism of extension services noted in the foregoing chapter. An example can be viewed in the following statement by Ms Red:

“They gave them seedlings, they gave them fertilizers and they gave them chemicals but they didn’t do the research, or soil testing, they just gave them things without talking to them. But they had meetings with them and they did discuss with the farmers and we were part of that but when the time comes they just gave them whatever was available, it was a fail.”

The same finding can be extended into the state's aim of relying on engineering services to aid the adaptability and resilience of smallholders specifically. The state aims to enhance the sector through upgrading infrastructure, and irrigation systems were one example in this regard (SAT-KZN, 2015). However, it became clear that although state had attempted such shifts in recent history, they have been misguided. The finding is ratified by the following quote by Ms Red:

"I can give you an example, they were renovating the irrigation schemes, the schemes the farmers were using were very old, they tried to introduce the pipe system, yet the farmers were using flood irrigation. Even farmers, they told them, 'it's not going to work'. Even today, part of the irrigation scheme is not working due to that."

Ms Red's two observations conform to several cases stated by civil society, across organisations regarding the failure of relying on technological advancement to achieve adaptable and consolidated food systems in rural KZN. Thus, the findings would indicate that despite the need for flexibility in agricultural production, technocracy does not always equate to farmer adaptability, as it may be misaligned with the needs of the farmers, and the capabilities of extension services. Alternatively, food sovereignty makes apparent the need for diversity within farming, the incorporation of IKS, and a diversion from the monocropping and technological emphasis associated with green revolution practise.

ii. Consolidation of Farming

Furthermore, the SAT-KZN (2015: 20) claims to provide a "new business model for agricultural development". It is apparent that public sector was aware of the challenges of smallholders to develop the scale of economy necessary to enhance market access and subsequent motivation for farmers to enhance cultivation. In an effort to rectify this shortcoming, SAT-KZN (2015: 20) aimed to create a flexible and adaptable model for a range of governance arrangements:

"It is thus incumbent on DARD to come up with a model that could be applied to suite a variety of different situations of ownership, management skills, knowledge and vision to assist the farmers to enter the commercial agricultural arena."

Ultimately despite the claim of a 'new' model to agricultural development this model was, at its core little more than traditional co-operative building:

"The model thus proposes that farmers are encouraged to consolidate their areas of production into on composite area, which will provide for sustainable profitable farming business. The group of farmers will form a managing business entity for their farming enterprise on the composite farming area."

Given the perspectives of development practitioners in the foregoing chapter, it is clear that the strategy of co-operatives is a precarious one, and viewed with a degree of scepticism. It is further apparent, that given the gendered dynamics noted above, co-operatives present further challenges to smallholder farming women. The adaptable model to "suite a variety of different situations" is therefore viewed with some trepidation by the researcher (SAT-KZN, 2015: 20).

6.8. Boundary-Spanning Structures

Boundary-spanning structures refer to the manner in which the governance arrangement is able to interact across sectors and subsectors (Termeer et al., 2018). Thus, the extent to which SAT-KZN connects with alternative entities, and the effect these connections may manifest for smallholder women is evaluated; the efficacy of which is guided by the following indicators set by Termeer et al. (2018): (1) *connection across multiple levels*, sectors and subsectors, (2) *overcoming boundaries between institutions of governance*, (3) *public-private partnership* (PPP). These indicators are discussed in so much as the manner in which the arrangement accounts for the effects of their interconnection with other structures compares and contrasts with a feminist food sovereignty insight. The researcher examines four entities which SAT-KZN concerns: public sector, private sector, third sector, and traditional authority.

i. Public Sector

"Effective development planning initiatives need to be integrated on several dimensions such as across sectors, space, spheres of responsibility, levels of government and timeframes." (SAT-KZN, 2015: 30)

Although the above sentiment, echoed throughout the SAT-KZN, shows an emphasis upon boundary-spanning, the direct intentions of how that is to be accomplished are

arguably vague. Due to the sheer scope of the SAT-KZN's (2015) operations, collaboration with a range of governmental departments is required, however, details regarding their incorporation in the province's agrarian transformation are unclear. Notwithstanding, the strategy reflects that state has been aware of its lack of integrated departments and institutions, and how this has challenged the greater entrance of emerging black farmers:

“The above challenges indicate a lack of co-ordination amongst state institutions, especially in the provision of financial support.” (SAT-KZN, 2015: 25).

An example can be found in the Agri-Village Programme which “forms the basis for planning of settlement areas for agricultural development” (SAT-KZN, 2015: 29). The programme seeks to develop new settlements which include: schools, secondary agricultural schools, clinics, cultural and sports facilities, postal services, taxi/bus rank, and garbage collection. The state is, however, unclear as to how the respective departments (e.g department of health, education, sports and culture) will be incorporated in the overhauling of these rural settlements.

ii. Private Sector

However, the same cannot be said regarding collaboration with the private sector. Much of the arrangement is centred around PPPs and means of ensuring the greater participation of the private sector within up-scaling farming operations within the province. Indeed, governance arrangements within SAT-KZN (2015: 22) are transparently reliant upon the private sector for their projects' success:

“Government cannot do everything itself – it must partner with commodity organisations, commercial farmers, the private sector and investors in order to support agricultural SMME's.”

Throughout the strategy, reference is made to the potential role of the private sector in facilitating agrarian change. The sentiment would run concurrently with the neoliberal underpinnings associated with the governance arrangements. Give the extent to which food sovereignty diverts from remote corporations' control over local food systems, the

immense emphasis placed on the private sector by state is unlikely to adhere to a heterodox economic food sovereignty perspective.

iii. Third Sector

SAT-KZN (2015) makes scant reference to the incorporation of the third sector within the province's rural transformation. The phrase 'civil society' appears once in the text, with reference to Operation Phakisa. The terms 'third sector', 'non-governmental organisation', and 'non-profit organisation' and their abbreviations were all searched for without result. Very little within the SAT-KZN would suggest the use, incorporation or collaboration of the third sector, despite their current position in rural development within the province. The finding stands contrasted with the insights of Hospes and Brons (2016), who considered the incorporation of third sector in governance as an indicator for its greater success.

iv. Traditional Authority

Despite evidence suggesting the profound effect traditional power structures have on rural governance, very little attention was given to explaining the strategic role of chieftaincy. The policy mentions traditional authority regarding lease agreements from the Ingonyama Trust albeit briefly. Rather, the state notes that lacking access to Ingonyama Trust land is a constraint to the development of the province and the need to liaise with traditional authority to avoid social conflict. Indeed, the SAT-KZN makes explicit reference to potential "social conflicts" within the SAT-KZN (2015: 17):

"Social conflicts: the proper consultation to be done with all relevant stakeholders including traditional leaders prior to implementation."

Ultimately, this would imply a view that traditional authority is viewed as a threat, rather than a potential opportunity for agrarian transformation. Multiple land usage arrangements are put forward within SAT-KZN (2015), and these include the inclusive agri-village program and the river valley catalytic program. Both programs look to make radical spatial and social changes to rural life, including the formation of micro-communities. Despite the ambitious task of re-dressing such arrangements in KZN, the state makes no effort to explain the manner in which traditional authority intersects with these changes.

v. PPPs: The ‘Joint Venture’

Only one clear example of boundary-spanning involving all these three power structures could be found in the form of Joint Venture (JV). In cultivating PPPs, the initiative is said to span across departments in developing a model of JV with local and foreign investors. Farmers will be obliged to form a community business entity, draw a lease with the Ingonyama Trust and share profits with the investor. The state will provide once off support in the form of fencing and soil preparation. Thereafter, the investor will provide technical assistance, and conduct farming operations in line with their agreement with respective markets. Sharing 50 to 60% of the profits, the investor will have the privilege to decide if, and when, they wish to leave the joint venture.

The concern a food sovereignty perspective engenders is one of farmer autonomy and self-determination. The idea of a joint venture, with initial state intervention, lease agreement with traditional authority, thereafter, control over farming operations and choice of sale of produce by private sector, the farmer is obliged to relinquish her control over her farming. The result, is a continued control over cultivation by corporate investment, continued power in the hands of traditional authority, and reliance on state.

The metanarrative would suggest a continued *modus operandi*, with almost every element required for the autonomy in decision making of the farmer being placed in the hands of hegemonic institutions. Therefore, although boundary spanning across sectors and departments, the JV governance arrangement will entrench the relegation and alienation of the smallholder farming women to a position of less bargaining power, decision making power, and removes the smallholder farmer's control over her land, her farming practise and her produce according to a food sovereignty perspective.

6.9. Inclusiveness

Inclusiveness was of paramount concern for the researcher in so far as food sovereignty emphasises the role of the smallholder farmer, the producer, and the consumer in decision-making. Therefore, the research looked for evidence of inclusiveness within the interviews and the SAT-KZN (2015). Regarding the latter, indicators used were set by Termeer et al. (2018) and included: (1) *involvement of marginalised voices*, (2) *social differentiation amongst participants*, and (3) *involvement of local communities and network*. In line with the food sovereignty perspective, particular attention was given to the inclusion of both women and smallholders.

i. Women

Little evidence would suggest that attention was paid to incorporate the voices of women, and women smallholders, within the SAT-KZN (2015). The words 'women/woman', 'female' or 'gender', was not mentioned anywhere within the main text despite the claim by the MEC, Cyril Xaba, quoted at the beginning of the chapter. The claim is not the only one given by the MEC of KZN DARD:

"I can assure you that the development of women in agriculture is a key objective as we implement our Strategy for Agrarian Transformation." (MEC, Cyril Xaba, Speaking notes, Conference for Women in Agribusiness, 2015).

The lack of any gender perspective, or particular mention of the challenges of women in the food system, who manifest the majority of smallholders, was a concerning finding within the research. However, it was not unexpected given some of the responses of participants in the previous chapter. When asked how governance might be improved, Ms Orange gave the following opinion.

"Well that could be improved by engaging with women or mobilizing women to have a stronger voice in influence government policies and to make it easy for them to access funding from government."

Ms Green goes further, and considers that food sovereignty, and its acknowledgement of indigenous knowledge systems in farming, have been in conflict with state agenda which overlooks the voice and abilities of women:

"[Organisation C] chose to work with marginalised people who had no voice and were not acknowledged by the state... if state changed its approach to validate what people know on the ground, or used to know, so it's not entirely obliterated, and validate women because at the moment the state often comes to them and tells them that they are wrong and that they are backward."

Ultimately, the SAT-KZN reflects an attempt to achieve adaptability and enhanced economic growth through technological advancement. However, evidence suggests that this modality overlooks the voice of women, their knowledge of traditional methods of farming and conflicts with the underpinnings of food sovereignty. Findings suggest that

the top down-approach adopted by state, including its technocratic *modus operandi* requires rethinking if the role and knowledge of women farmers is to be acknowledged in governance. Indeed, and despite the rhetoric of the minister in charge of drafting the SAT-KZN (2015), the lack of women farmer's inclusion and gender considerations in the strategy is, generally, of immense concern.

ii. **Smallholders**

It became apparent that the ultimate concern of SAT-KZN is that of the smallholder. The SAT-KZN (2015) is sensitive to the historical inequalities associated with the province and repeated reference is made to the precarious position of smallholders. Specific emphasis is placed on the marginalised smallholders located on former bantustans, and their development is a fundamental aspiration of the SAT-KZN (2015). However, the SAT-KZN (2015: 11) simultaneously aims to consolidate industrial farming within the province which is viewed in the "New Approach to Agricultural Development". The approach aims to:

"Strengthen the smaller stratum of large-scale commercial farms, which account for a disproportionate share of farms jobs, and promote a better balance between large-scale commercial farms via land reform and development within the former KwaZulu-Natal administration areas."

Given the dualistic nature of the South African food system, which is largely monopolised by corporate industrial agriculture noted by Kirsten (2017), the idea of achieving a balance with smallholders while concomitantly strengthening commercial farming is arguably counter-intuitive. Furthermore, the extent to which the perspectives of smallholders have been accounted for in the design of this governance arrangement is dubious. Evidence from the interviews above suggested governance has failed to give voice to smallholders and this was a recurring concern across organisations:

"They have to start speaking to the farmers first, see what they want and then give what the people want, not what the government is thinking going assist them." (Ms Red).

"I know when we were trying to gather people around for advocacy there was a big resistance, they didn't feel that they could go speak out to government,

even in local authority structures and traditional authority structures.” (Ms Green).

In reviewing the SAT-KZN (2015), it became apparent that this may potentially be the result of decision-making discrepancies within the arrangement’s governing structures. Three tiers of steering committees are responsible for decision-making, including the local steering committee, the district steering committee and the provincial steering committee. At the level of local steering committee, farmer representatives are explicitly included within. However, at the district and provincial levels, farmer representatives are excluded. The researcher argues that this lack of representation in higher decision-making shows a lack of inclusion and manifests a hinderance to the greater centralisation of smallholders in governance.

6.10. Transformative Capacity

The final findings and interpretations of this work concern the SAT-KZN’s transformative capacity. The theme engenders a broader view of SAT-KZN, and the narratives of third sector and, ultimately, discusses the ability of governance to cultivate radical change within the agrarian context. Transformative capacity, according to Termeer et al. (2018: 88), refers to an arrangement’s ability to “overcome path dependencies and create adequate conditions to foster structural change”. Several indicators are used as subthemes which are respectively considered according to a feminist food sovereignty perspective. These include (1) *rectifying dependencies*, (2) *cultivating leadership*, (3) *resources*. Exemplars which concerned these indicators are provided below.

i. Rectifying Dependencies: Welfare Mechanisms

The SAT-KZN makes explicit reference to an effort to avoid facilitating a dependency on government, and this is particularly clear regarding small-scale farmers rather than commercial beneficiaries. Within its funding model and exit strategy the SAT-KZN (2015: 33-34) makes the following statement:

“The DARD has realised the importance of support to enable farmers to be successful without creating dependence on government...the DARD will provide agricultural training for food security with the aim to graduate them to the next level of food production. The key principle of the food security support is to promote self-sufficiency and decrease dependency on government.”

The above suggests a view of autonomy and self-sufficiency associated with a food sovereignty framework. The consideration of a successful farmer is largely subjective given the diverse reasonings for agricultural production: GDP, job creation, profit, or for third sector, fulfilling the right to food. Despite these differing views of successful food systems development, it is clear the DARD is aware of both the need for autonomy while concomitantly acknowledge the transformative potential of grants to facilitate this autonomy.

ii. Resources: Land Reform

The strategy is aware of the historically racialised land distribution which contributes to agrarian inequality today. This stands in concurrence with the insights of the likes of Mashau (2018) who note the racial inequality which manifests in South Africa. It is just as cognisant of the extent to which land reform has failed to achieve the necessary change amongst small-scale black farmers. Resultantly, SAT-KZN claims to manifest a novel approach to land reform in the province. In this regard, emphasis is placed, largely, on commodities, identified in the NDP and the APAP and PGDS, as having greater remunerative potential. The selection of farmers will, therefore, be a joint decision between state and commodity organisations. Collaboration with third sector or farming unions is not mentioned. The main concern regards the following:

“whilst restitution is rights based, the district land committees with the support of the provincial technical committee will guide the prioritisation of claims to be settled in order to unlock the agricultural potential for the area. The settlement/business models for restitution projects will be developed upfront with the respective commodities, and will ensure that there is a separation of the land holding and business entities.” (SAT-KZN, 2015: 27).

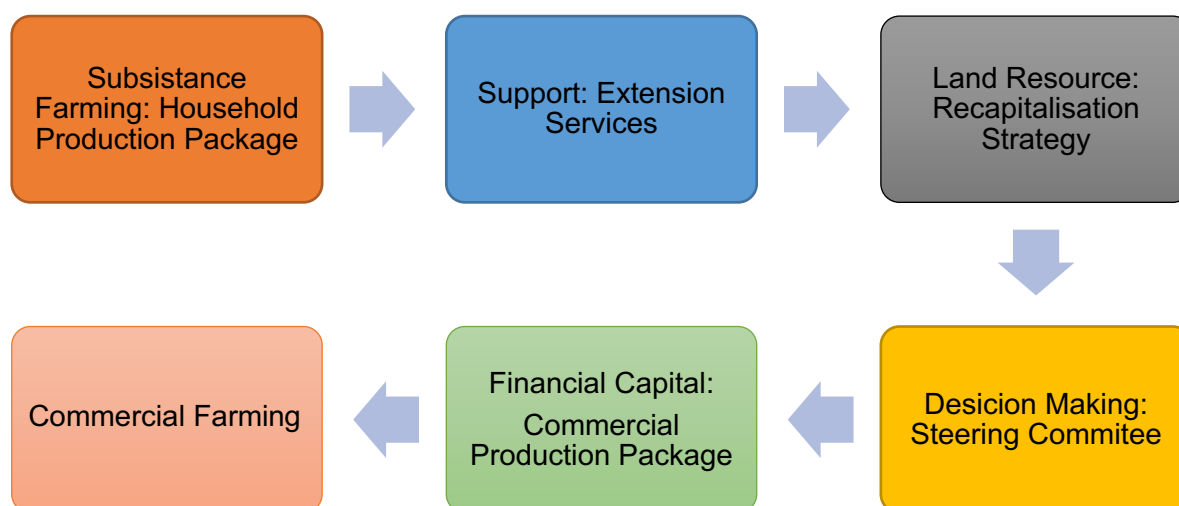
The word “whilst” engendered the researcher’s trepidation. In noting the ultimate goal of land reform, which includes restitution, is the redress of previously marginalised persons and recompensing inequality: the threat of neglecting human rights in favour of commercial viability is reminiscent of Apartheid policy. Furthermore, the forced separation of land holding to business entity offers the possibility of further alienation of farmer from land in favour of greater financial growth over food sovereignty or security.

Lastly, the recapitalisation strategy means that when a farmer gains access to resituated land, she is unlikely to gain the required capital unless adhering to the following: “Farmer must be fulltime, farmers must demonstrate capacity to implement the place, expertise for self-management, Joint Ventures, co-management” (SAT-KZN, 2015: 28). For the women farmer, the possibility of converting to full-time commercial farmer, given the extent to which she is obliged to engage in social reproduction, and capacity in care-giving roles, in actuality she would be unlikely to benefit from the recapitalisation strategy. Thus, a clear bias toward men manifests, and the gendered aspect agrarian transformation is, again, overlooked.

iii. Transforming the Position of Smallholder Women

The final section of this chapter illustrates the mechanisms which the SAT-KZN has placed “to unleash the power of our women subsistence farmers” (Cyril Xaba, MEC for the DARD, Women Economic Empowerment Summit, 2016). To do so, and by incorporating all programs and policies within the strategy, the researcher creates a narrative, from the subsistence farmer to a point of enhancement. In doing so, a food systems perspective undergirded by feminist food sovereignty shows the reality of the SAT-KZN and how its inability to transform and enhance the smallholder women is explicated.

Figure 6: DARD Proposed Pathways to Enhance Smallholder Development



(Researcher's Compilation, 2022)

Subsistence farming, operating with the assistance of the ‘Household Production Package’, develops smallholders at the initial point of state support. For this farmer to progress, she must comply with the ‘commodity approach’ to gain funding and the relevant

support of extension services. The approach is designed to “identify with the farmers the commodities with the highest advantage from a resource use and financial benefit” (SAT-KZN, 2015: 33). Her options are limited, to gain support from extension, she must select one of the commodities to which the officer has been trained according to the technocratic modality illustrated above. Moreover, unless she decides to grow that specific commodity, she is unlikely to get land. Despite land redistribution being rights-based, the new approach means land is to be allocated according to the most likely farmer to succeed in terms of profit, as decided by a commodity organisation.

If she is fortunate enough to gain this support, and resources required, she is provided with the opportunity to apply for a commercialisation package to enhance her productive capacity. However, she is unable to access this without a business plan. Despite the high levels of illiteracy amongst these women, which was recognised frequently in previous data, she is unable to access funding without it. Thereafter, her application is decided upon by a provincial steering committee that incorporates no farmer representatives, so her interests are under-represented. Her application is influenced according to the key principles of state’s recapitalisation strategy, meaning that:

“(1) Funding for market production would be based on bankable business plans, and a combination of loans and grants; (2) Farmer must be fulltime and commit to training and skills development (proxy farmers are excluded); (3) Farmers must demonstrate capacity to implement the plan, expertise and capacity for self-management, JV’s, mentorship, co-management etc”. (SAT-KZN, 2015: 28).

Firstly, the challenge of illiteracy poses a threat to their ability to produce a business plan. Secondly, given the immense responsibilities of smallholder women described in the previous chapter, it is unlikely she will be able to devote herself fulltime. Thirdly, these challenges are unlikely to be acknowledged in governance due to her lack of representation in higher, provincial level steering committees. It is clear, therefore, that in terms of transformative capacity, the governance arrangements associated with the SAT-KZN (2015) are somewhat unlikely to radically enhance the position of smallholder women in the province.

6.11. Conclusion

The chapter began with an overview of the SAT-KZN and reflected upon the neoliberal underpinnings which illustrate the initial dissonance between third sector, food sovereignty thinking and state strategy. Thereafter, an observation of how the strategy incorporates system-based problem framing, across production, processing and consumption was provided. Findings indicated that while both state and third sector see agro-processing as an opportunity for increased enhancement and localisation, the commodity approach to production and its effect upon consumption differed considerably. Following that, an analysis of adaptability took place. Findings suggested that state had incorporated two strategies in an attempt to facilitate flexibility across environmental, institutional and social differences and shifts. Themes included an emphasis on technocracy, and the use of technology and extension services to adapt to alternative areas. In an effort to develop a strategy flexible enough to apply to a range of milieus, the state encourages consolidated farming. Both agendas diverted from the feminist food sovereignty perspective.

Similarly, a view of boundary-spanning structures showed that while state was aware of need to transcend departments and sector boundaries, their focus was primarily upon private sector and the facilitation of PPPs. Moreover, the encouragement of JVs was interpreted as a threat to the autonomy of the smallholder, given the extent to which decision making was placed in the hands of various hegemonic institutions. The findings were in direct conflict with the feminist food sovereignty framework in so far as the autonomy of the food producer was compromised. Observation of inclusiveness and transformative capacity showed that the SAT-KZN had failed to take a gendered perspective in any significant way despite the claims of the MEC who signed off on it. Resultantly, the researcher argued that the transformative capacity of governance arrangements was compromised in so far as these arrangements were misaligned to the pursuit of smallholder women's empowerment.

Chapter Seven: Conclusions and Recommendations

7.1. Introduction

The final chapter of this work summarises and discusses its key findings and offers recommendations for alternative research, governance and development praxes. The chapter is organised according to the research's objectives and key questions. Thus, the concept and actions of food sovereignty within the context of KZN's rural development are discussed. These conceptual narratives are integrated with findings pertinent to gender equity, and role of smallholder women in ensuring the right to food. Consequently, the feminist food sovereignty framework and its limitations are illustrated. Following that, findings associated with agri-food and land governance reflect the extent to which such a model may manifest a clinical analysis and intervention. The chapter concludes with recommendations for further research, alternative governance, and development praxes in the province.

7.2. Feminist Food Sovereignty

Understandings of food sovereignty in the landscape of KZN's rural development were diverse. However, comparison with the existing pillars of food sovereignty showed a consistency necessary for the consolidation of a uniform framework. Whilst there was conceptual congruence amongst development practitioners regarding the underpinnings of food sovereignty, it became clear development praxes differed considerably. Consequently, the researcher noted a distinct lack of collaboration amongst these NGOs which was argued to compromise their transformative potential. Notwithstanding, recurring emphasis upon the centralisation of food producers, autonomy and local control over food systems were apparent. Localisation and autonomy, however, differed according to scale with participants prioritising the individual, the household or communal food systems. The finding proved a profound element in the consolidation of a feminist link to food sovereignty: As the scale of food systems condense to the household level, normative gender dynamics surrounding food become more profound. The researcher considers, therefore, that the 'grassroots' modality associated with food sovereignty finds cogency within feminist discourse in so far as gender discrepancies may be highlighted at the micro-systems level.

i. Women's Autonomy

It became apparent that women formed the majority of farmers across all organisations. All participants remarked upon the critical role of women in cultivating food sufficiency. Reasons for this differed but included male-outmigration, maladroitness colonial and Apartheid policy, illiteracy, tribal conflict and traditional gender norms. What proved concerning was how amongst these causalities, women's agency and individual choice to produce food was poorly reflected. In other words, women's predominant position in agriculture, although invaluable, was not the result of autonomous decision-making, but rather a range of external factors. Given both feminism and food sovereignty's prioritisation of autonomy, it remains unclear how they may be reconciled if women's role in agriculture is one of necessity rather than human choice. Regardless of causality, women's role in buoying household survival remained central, and while deprivation increases within the province, the researcher argues it will become increasingly critical. Thus, clinical intervention is predicated on enhancing the wellbeing and capabilities of smallholder women with emphasis upon household food dynamics. Indeed, the profundity of their responsibility in household's right to food indicated a shift in normative assumptions of gender roles which facilitated a feminist underpinning to food sovereignty. What the researcher coins a breadwinner paradox, women smallholders are increasingly responsible for ensuring family survival in rural KZN, thus, given the bottom-up approach associated with food sovereignty greater possibility for their enfranchisement is facilitated.

ii. Gender, Food Sovereignty and COVID-19

The added responsibility of both social reproduction and agricultural production and its affect upon gender dynamics was clearest during the COVID-19 pandemic. Findings suggested that regulations associated with the pandemic encouraged men's greater presence in the household which effected intra-household gendered labour divisions. Perspectives indicated the result was enhanced food sovereignty within communities, a finding which would conflict with those of Ngcoya and Kumarakulasingam (2016). The finding would ratify the need for a gendered view of food sovereignty, and the importance of observing gender dynamics given the localisation of food systems which food sovereignty espouses. Moreover, two gendered aspects became apparent which required attention for food sovereignty to realise the right to food within the province. The findings concern two different gender predilections in agriculture. Firstly, men's preference in agricultural production was focused upon livestock while women's was vegetable production. The findings would align with those of Sachs (2019: 5) who refers to 'gender/species power relationships.' Food sovereignty's focus upon small-scale,

vegetable cultivation therefore finds cogency with the actions of women particularly and offers a mechanism for their enfranchisement.

iii. Gendered Agricultural Intentions

Secondly, when men did invest themselves in crop production, their choice of why to farm differed fundamentally from women. Men tended to be more concerned with expanded farming operations for income, while women focused predominantly upon household food sufficiency. Their respective aspirations for farming were reflected in their choice of crop, with men being more inclined to engage in cash-crops and niche crops. The finding proved a bedrock for a feminist food sovereignty critique of agri-food governance arrangements. In review of the SAT-KZN, it was clear governance, like male smallholders, aimed to prioritise cash-cropping for income, GDP contribution and job creation. Conversely, women prioritised family subsistence, and effort that ran concurrently with the modus operandi associated with the third sector. It became clear, therefore, that the dissonant narratives of state and civil society ran parallel with gender dynamics of smallholder farming in KZN which illustrated a direct link to feminist food sovereignty and its relation to agri-food governance (see Figure 4).

iv. Rethinking Welfare Mechanisms

Various aspects of food systems governance were considered by participants, including welfare mechanisms, extension services and co-operatives. Regarding the former, welfare mechanisms received mixed views from participants. However, some indication was made for a positive interconnection between welfare mechanisms and the enfranchisement of smallholder women in so far as the latter was able to advance their own food production. These findings conflict with those of Pereira (2014) who consider social grants a threat to a food system by increasing reliance on purchased food and thereby facilitating de-agrarianisation. The author considers, therefore, that common and potentially overly-simplistic notions of social grants must be rethought in so far as such mechanisms may prove invaluable to women's decision-making, and ability, to continue small-scale agricultural production and enhance the right to food.

v. Individualism and Co-operatives

The efficacy of co-operative building was additionally treated with scepticism by some development practitioners and little evidence suggested that co-operatives facilitated a gender equitable enhancement of local food systems. The finding was cause for concern in so far as co-operative formations are central to the strategies held by state, and many

in third sector, for agrarian transformation. Perspectives indicated that the involvement of both men and women caused gendered conflict within these co-operatives, largely at the expense of the latter: Women were perceived as having the greater work ethic and commitment towards co-operative whereas men potentially compromised their success. Hence, micro-scale, personal decision-making autonomy amongst farming women requires consideration as priority in initiating and governing co-operatives according to a feminist food sovereignty perspective.

vi. Land and Gender Matters

Similarly, gendered conflict in matters of land ownership and tenure became a fundamental concern. Men's greater access and control over land influenced their ability to expand farming operations. Moreover, gendered responsibilities surrounding livestock and crops were also influenced by land arrangements in rural KZN. A recurring challenge faced by women smallholders was the destruction of their crops by livestock invasion. With livestock being the predominant remit of men, a gendered conflict of interest in farming became apparent. Despite their ability to ensure greater household food sufficiency, women's marginalisation in the local decision-making and land governance associated with grazing compromised their efforts.

Findings indicated that traditional authority was the primary institution responsible for land governance. Across all organisations, PTO was found to be the only arrangement experienced by women smallholders. The patriarchal nature of such a governance arrangement invariably compromises women's access to arable land. Moreover, the patrilineal customary law associated with it compromises women's security and willingness to invest more in land she may lose. However, various institutional and kinship arrangements exist around land distribution. It was apparent that while examples of women being stripped of land and undercut by men, either in positions of community or kinship authority this was not that case in all areas associated with the Ingonyama Trust. Traditional authorities are, therefore, not a monolith, and gender inequity should not be assumed in all areas under traditional authority. The findings, therefore, do not imply that PTO is an arrangement inherently gender asymmetric in itself, but requires a progressive overhaul, and safeguards, to ensure equitable distribution and management of land in kinship arrangements and traditional governance.

Given the findings above, and accounting for a plethora of variables relevant to the enhancement of smallholder women noted, the author considers feminist food sovereignty as a viable apparatus to confront food insufficiency and gender inequity. Moreover, the models adopted by third sector, and the perspectives of their practitioners reflected a congruence with women empowerment and food sufficiency at micro-levels. Thus, part one of the research manifested a consolidated framework of feminist food sovereignty which may better realise gender equity and the right to food in the province.

7.3. Critiquing the Strategy for Agrarian Transformation KwaZulu-Natal

However, to test the efficacy of such a framework, and offer recommendations toward its implementation in governance and development praxis, a policy analysis was undertaken. To ensure that this critique conformed to a holistic food systems approach and therefore offer viable recommendations, feminist food sovereignty was scaffolded by Termeer et al.'s (2018) diagnostic framework for food systems governance. Notwithstanding constant rhetoric in the DARD regarding the empowerment of smallholder women, no evidence suggested SAT-KZN had taken a gendered view in any significant manner. No attention was paid to the central position of smallholder women, or the gendered barriers they face.

i. Conflicting Agendas

Conversely, findings indicated that the neoliberal governance arrangements of SAT-KZN were in mutual conflict with both women smallholders and third sector food sovereignty. A consideration of system-based problem framing showed a unidimensional perspective of food systems. Fundamentally, SAT-KZN positions a food system as a source of income and employment and sees food, not as an intimate and inextricable human right, but a commodity for profit. A comparison may be made to the building of a healthcare system for the purpose of job creation, as opposed to healing the sick. As a result of this fundamentally flawed view of the purpose of agrarian transformation, men are provided with a greater advantage in so far as their predilection toward cash-cropping and income align more with the support and strategy of state.

ii. Adaptability or Technocracy

It was clear the SAT-KZN had accounted for, and attempted to, ensure the adaptability of governance arrangements. However, their modus operandi would again reflect the failing neoliberal strategies of the green revolution from which food sovereignty diverts. A significant emphasis was placed upon a technocratic method of extension service as a

means to ensure the flexibility of the food system. In contradiction to itself, however, the commodity approach adopted in the arrangement meant extension officers were to receive training for a particular area and a particular commodity. Given the economic and climatic sensitivity of food systems, over-specialisation and an inability for extension to react to immediate shifts is a compromise to adaptability. Rather, the perspective cultivated by development practitioners and advocated in agroecology, was a diversity, and the incorporation of IKS for enhanced resilience and to ensure both adaptability and the autonomy of the food producer.

iii. Boundaries and Sector Influence

SAT-KZN, under the category of boundary-spanning structures, showed a further extension of a neoliberal metanarrative. Governance arrangements were screened for inter-departmental collaboration, incorporation of private sector, third sector and traditional authorities. Little evidence suggested any significant effort to involve third sector or other departments within KZN's agrarian transformation strategy. Ultimately, emphasis is placed upon the role of private sector, and specifically the formulation of PPPs and JVs. Due to the hegemonic institutions which govern these JVs; state involvement, traditional authorities' control over land, private sector's control over production, sale and capital, the feminist food sovereignty framework engenders a disparaging view of such an arrangement. Specifically, given the extent to which autonomy remains central to the underpinnings of food sovereignty, and to which commodity based-partnerships remain aligned with the predilections of male smallholders, they are unlikely to enhance women small-scale farmers.

iv. Inclusion as Transformative Potential

The following category, inclusiveness, reflected a similar disregard for the voices of smallholders and women in decision-making and active governance. As noted above, no evidence within the SAT-KZN reflected an effort to centralise women within the arrangement and no element of the strategy reflected an understanding of gender challenges or predilections were found. Conversely, the empowerment of smallholders was a foremost concern for the SAT-KZN. However, in analysis of the governing structures within the arrangement showed that farmers were not represented in the district steering committee, nor the provincial steering committee. Final consideration was given to the transformative capacity of SAT-KZN. In this regard, the transformation was understood according to the aspirations of feminist food sovereignty for land and agri-food

governance. Ultimately, the researcher argues that due to a continued lack of inclusiveness and the neoliberal narratives apparent within the arrangement, the potential for radical agrarian transformation, specifically for women smallholders, is inevitably unlikely. Thus, several recommendations are put forward to development practitioners, policy makers and researchers.

7.4. Recommendations

To extend feminist food sovereignty, realise a greater right to food and gender equity, the researcher proposes the following recommendations to relevant stakeholders:

i. Development Practitioners

The researcher suggests that development practitioners in the landscape of KZN's rural development undertake a concerted attempt to collaborate amongst themselves. The lack of inter-organisational collaboration compromises the transformative potential of their efforts. Hence, the researcher proposes the formulation of think tanks, and formalised third sector associations for relevant organisations, including women's organisations, in the province, thus assisting the consolidation of a more unified developmental strategy. Ultimately, this would increase the transformative potential of respective organisations despite possible differences in concept and praxes.

Further emphasis should be placed upon providing farmers with the necessary skills and equipment to engage in greater agro-processing. While NGOs frequently focus their attention upon production and consumption, taking a food-systems view revealed the greater potential of agro-processing. To engender greater autonomy, extend shelf-life and therefore food sufficiency, and to facilitate value adding for small-scale farmers' empowerment, agro-processing was shown to be an underappreciated opportunity.

Major challenges facing smallholder women included the time constraints associated with the responsibilities of social reproduction and agricultural production. Insights indicated the potential for youth to play a major role in this regard and in ensuring future food sufficiency. Thus, developmental organisations are encouraged to target youth, and women, in advocacy and development practise for the sustained empowerment of smallholder farming in the province. Given the high levels of youth unemployment, an effort to reflect agriculture as a viable and valued career would be advantageous.

NGOs are recommended not to focus upon co-operative building amongst their beneficiaries until household food sufficiency has been secured. Moreover, development practitioners should be highly cognisant of the social factors, including gender dynamics, which influence the success of such co-operatives. Given the patriarchal asymmetries which undermine women's efforts, development practitioners should be well aware of taking steps to ensure equity within co-operatives.

ii. Policy Makers

To achieve concomitant gender equity and enhanced food sufficiency, policy makers are advised to consider the gender specific challenges facing smallholder farming women and provide safeguards to mitigate them. To do so, the researcher recommends greater inclusion of rural women's associations and women smallholders in dialogue surrounding governance, programmes and funding prior to intervention. As such, the province's top-down approach should be reconsidered and the voices of those predominant in smallholder farming heard throughout governance and state intervention.

Furthermore, regarding the state's emphasis upon JVs and PPPs which limit the decision-making and bargaining power of smallholders, provincial arrangements should be carefully monitored. A consistent M&E program which evaluates the outcomes of JVs for smallholders should be implemented to ensure the equity and sustainability of such partnerships are maintained. Moreover, greater inclusivity of the voice of smallholders in the arrangement would be advantageous and a diversion from the didactic, top down approach would help avoid misaligned and potentially exploitative partnerships and interventions.

Similarly, the researcher sees no reason to convert PTO under traditional authority to private ownership or any alternative arrangement if progressive measures are undertaken. However, given that traditional authorities are not voted for by constituents, and therefore lack accountability, greater opacity must be cultivated between state, traditional authority and constituents. Thus, the researcher recommends an independent watchdog, responsible for ensuring social equity across leaders within with the Ingonyama Trust to ensure social equity in land and associated agri-food matters. Furthermore, state should actively engage with formal financial institutions to ensure PTO is viewed as a viable form of land control to enable greater access to credit.

Finally, although technology offers multiple advantages to the adaptability and efficacy of agricultural production, state is recommended not to exclude, or devalue IKS of food production, storage, processing, or consumption as viable and ecology sound alternatives. Extension services should be made aware of agroecological and traditional methods of seed saving, cultivation, consumption and storage and therefore, be equipped with a range of diverse knowledge to facilitate adaptability and resilience in smallholder farming. The result would facilitate greater resilience and flexibility to react to economic and climactic shifts and enhance smallholder women's position in food systems.

iii. Further Research

Ultimately, there are several points of interest which require further academic attention. A factor not overtly considered within this research, but which became implicit in its findings, was the effect of an aging population upon small-scale agricultural production. There was consideration of whether youth were turning away from smallholding and research is required to examine the extent to which this is occurring, why, what affect it may potentially have on provincial food systems, and how to intervene. It is made further pivotal given the increasing number of child-headed households in the province. The researcher proposes a mixed-method analysis to determine these trends and potential clinical models for intervention.

Given this research's focus upon rural food systems and the social and institutional dynamics associated with agrarian communities, there is a need to examine what feminist food sovereignty may mean for urban food sufficiency. Gender inequity and food insufficiency are issues not exclusive to agrarian communities, however variables differ, and growing movement and third sector intervention in urban agroecology are apparent. The researcher proposes a case study methodology to engender greater insight in feminist food sovereignty within the context of urban third sector development and state planning policy and governance.

The research conflicted with two researchers considerably, both within the South African context, which indicates further analysis for clarification. First the work found that male presence within the household, specifically with the return of men from urban settings during COVID-19, had a positive effect on agricultural/food sovereignty household operations and dynamics. These findings conflicted with those of Ngcoya and Kumarakulasingam (2018). Further research on how the absent male phenomenon

described in Chapter Five effects food sovereignty and gender equity is, therefore, required. A second findings conflicted with the insight of Pereira (2014) which considered welfare grants as threats to agrarianisation due to an increased reliance on purchased food. Conversely, findings within this research showed social grants to be potential sources of smallholder enfranchisement and therefore a centralisation and localisation of food systems. Further research which considers the effects of social grants on agrarian food dynamics and smallholder women empowerment would, therefore, be valuable.

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Appendix 1 – Ethical Clearance Letter



06 July 2022

Finn Alexander Hartwell Kinnear (219079387)
School of Social Sciences
Howard College Campus

Dear FAH Kinnear,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00004262/2022

Project title: A food sovereignty insight into land, gender, and justice in provincial agri-food governance: Lessons from Non-Governmental Organizations in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

Degree: Masters

Approval Notification – Expedited Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 03 June 2022 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. **PLEASE NOTE:** Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

This approval is valid until 06 July 2023.

To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 - 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Yours sincerely,



Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)

/ms

Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, 4000, South Africa

Telephone: +27 (0)31 260 8350/4557/3587 Email: hssrec@ukzn.ac.za Website: <http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics>

Founding Campuses: Edgewood Howard College Medical School Pietermaritzburg Westville

INSPIRING GREATNESS

Appendix 2 – Informed Consent (English and isiZulu)

Consent Form for Participation of Human Subjects in Research University of KwaZulu-Natal

PROJECT TITLE:

A food sovereignty insight into land, gender, and justice in provincial agri-food governance: Lessons from Non-Governmental Organizations in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

RESEARCHER: Finn Kinnear

STUDENT NUMBER: 219079387

PROTOCOL REFERENCE NUMBER:

DURATION: Please note that the interview will require **sixty minutes** of your time.

Dear Participant,

My name is Finn Kinnear, I am a Masters candidate at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I am engaging in research entitled; **A food sovereignty insight into land, gender, and justice in provincial agri-food governance: Lessons from Non-Governmental Organizations in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.** . This research explores NGO food sovereignty perspectives on current provincial policies and strategies in KwaZulu-Natal for the benefit of smallholder farming women.

I would like to kindly ask for your participation in this study. Any participation is voluntary, you may choose to take part or decline participation. If you chose to participate, you may withdraw at any time and you have the right to decline answering any question. If you decide to participate, the researcher and supervisor will be made aware and will assign you a **pseudonym**; to protect your identity and privacy.

The interviews will be audio **recorded** and the data used for academic purposes and scientific papers.

Please fill in the attached form and do not hesitate to ask any questions regarding the study (now, during and after the interviews).

Signature of Researcher	
Name of Researcher	
Date	

PERMISSION FROM PARTICIPANT TO BE INTERVIEWED:

I _____ (full name) on this day of _____ (date) agree to be interviewed for the above research project. I understand that I will be asked questions that the researcher finds relevant for this study. I also understand that the interview will be recorded and the data may be used at a later

Name of Participant	
Signature of Participant	
Date	

stage in the research report. I understand that I can withdraw at any time.

PERMISSION FOR AUDIO-RECORDED INTERVIEWS

I _____ (full name) on this day of _____ (date) hereby consent / do not consent to have this interview recorded.

Name of Participant	
Signature of Participant	
Date	

Contact details of researcher: Email: 219079387@stu.ukzn.ac.za

SUPERVISOR: Email: Seedatm@ukzn.ac.za

Please tick the appropriate box:

I consent to participating the semi-structured interview in a place convenient to me.

Yes	No
-----	----

I..... (Full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in this research project. I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire. I hereby consent to have this interview recorded:

Yes	No
-----	----

Signature of Participant	
Name of Participant	
Date	

**Ifomu Lemvume Yokubamba Iqhaza Kwezifundo Zabantu Ocwaningweni
Lwenyuvesi YaKwaZulu-Natali**

ISIHLOKO SEPHROJEKTHI: *Ukuqonda ngokudla okudlayo ngomhlaba, ubulili kanye nobulungiswa ekubusweni kokudla kwezolimo esifundazweni: Izifundo ezivela emphakathini waKwaZulu-Natal, eNingizimu Afrika.*

UMHLOLI:

INOMBOLO YOMFUNDI:

UBUDE BESIKHATHI: Sicela wazi ukuthi inhlolekhono izodinga imizuzu engamashumi ayisithupha yesikhathi sakho.

Mhlanganyeli

Othandekayo,

Ngingumfundi weSociology Masters eNyuvesi yaKwaZulu-Natal. Ngenza iphrojekthi yocwaningo enesihloko esithi; Ukuqonda kobuholi bokudla ngomhlaba, ubulili kanye nobulungiswa ekubusweni kokudla kwezolimo esifundazweni: Izifundo ezivela emphakathini waKwaZulu-Natali, eNingizimu Afrika.

Lolu cwaningo lucwaninga ngemibono yokuzimela kokudla ngezinqubomgomo namaqhinga esifundazwe KwaZulu-Natal. Inhlosongqangi ukuthola izindlela zokuphatha umhlaba/ukudla kwezolimo okudala uhlelo lokudla olusebenza kahle kakhulu emvelweni, nolunobulungiswa emphakathini.

Ngicela ukuhlanganyela kwakho kulolu cwaningo. Noma yikuphi ukuhlanganyela kungokuzithandela, okusho ukuthi ungakhetha ukubamba iqhaza noma cha. Uma ukhethe ukubamba iqhaza, yazi ukuthi ungahoxa nganoma yisiphi isikhathi futhi uma kukhona noma yimiphi imibuzo ongafuni ukuyiphendula, kuyinqaba yakho efanele. Uma unquma ukubamba iqhaza, umcwaningi nomphathi bazokwaziswa futhi bazokunika igama-mbumbulu; ukuvikela ubuwena.

Izingxoxo zizorekhodwa futhi idatha ingasetshenziswa ngokuhamba kwesikhathi embikweni wocwaningo. Okunamathiselwe ngezansi ingxenye yemvume. Sicela ugcwalise izikhala ezingenalutho kuleli fomula futhi ungangabazi ukubuza noma yimiphi imibuzo mayelana nocwaningo (manje, nangesikhathi senhlolekhono kanye noma ngemva kwezinhlolekhono).

Igama lomcwaningi:

Isiginisha yomcwaningi:

IMVUME EVELA KOMBAmiqhaza YOKUXOXWA:

Mina _____ (igama eliphelele) ngalolu suku luka- _____ (usuku) ngivuma ukuxoxisana nomsebenzi wocwaningo ongenhla. Nginyaqonda ukuthi ngizobuzwa imibuzo umcwaningi ayithola ihambisana nalolu cwaningo. Nginyaqonda futhi ukuthi inhlolokhono izorekhodwa futhi idatha ingase isetshenziswe kamuva embikweni wocwaningo. Nginyaqonda ukuthi ngingahoxa noma nini.

Igama lombambi qhaza:

Isiginesha yombambi qhaza:

Usuku:

IMVUME YEZINXOXO EZIREKHODIWEYO

Mina _____ (igama eligcwele) ngalolu suku lwe- _____ (idethi) ngiyavuma / angivumi ukuthi le nhlolokhono irekhodwe.

Igama lombambi qhaza:

Isiginesha yombambi qhaza:

Usuku:

Imininingwane yokuxhumana yomcwaningi: 219079387@stu.ukzn.ac.za

UMPHATHI: Mariam Seedat-Khan

Sicela uphawule ibhokisi elifanele:
Ngiyavuma ukubamba iqhaza kwinhlolokhono enesakhiwo esincane endaweni engilungele.

Yebo:

Cha:

I..... (Amagama aphelele obambe iqhaza) ngiyaqinisekisa ukuthi ngiyakuqonda okuqukethwe kulo mbhalo kanye nohlobo lwephrojekthi yocwaningo, futhi ngiyavuma ekubambeni iqhaza kulo msebenzi wocwaningo. Ngियाqonda ukuthi ngikhululekile ukuthi ngihoxe kuphrojekthi noma kunini, uma ngifisa kanjalo.

Isiginesha Yobambe iqhaza: Usuku:

.....

Igama Lombambiqhaza:

Appendix 3 – Interview Schedule

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS

TITLE

A food sovereignty insight into land, gender, and justice in provincial agri-food governance: Lessons from Non-Governmental Organisations in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

RESEARCHER: Mr Finn Kinnear

SUPERVISOR: Professor Mariam Seedat Khan CCS (10759)

DURATION

Please note that the interview will require approximately **60-90 minutes** of your time.

PROTOCOL REFERENCE NUMBER

INTERVIEW - CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA								
Name and Surname								
Preferred pseudonym								
Nationality								
Gender	Male		Female		Other		Confidential	
Race For statistical purposes only.	African		Coloured		Indian		White	
Age	20-29 years old							
	30-39 years old							
	40-49 years old							
	50 and above							
Highest educational qualifications								
Please describe your role/position in the organisation:								
How did you arrive in this area of work?								
ORGANISATIONAL DATA								
Name of organisation?								
Regional, provincial, and national offices?								
Key mission of the organisation.								
Local government partnerships								

Provincial government partnerships	
National government partnerships	
International partnerships	
Staffing	
Training	
ORGANISATIONAL ROLE IN FOOD SOVEREIGNTY	
What projects are you currently implementing?	
How do these projects align OR divert from current state strategies and policy?	
What does the concept of food sovereignty mean to you?	
What do think food sovereignty means to your beneficiaries?	
WOMEN IN THE FOOD SYSTEM	
Please estimate the number of small-holder farmers your organisation works with?	
Please could you describe the general age, race, and gender, of these farmers?	
What percentage of these farmers are women?	
What influences the numbers?	
How would you describe the role of women in the food system?	
How would you describe the role of women in small hold farming?	
How would you describe their role in agro-processing?	
What potential role do you think food sovereignty plays in empowering these women?	
What gender specific challenges do women small-hold farmers confront at a household level?	
What gender specific challenges do women small-hold farmers confront at a community level?	
What interventions are required to mitigate these specific challenges?	
What role would greater food sovereignty play in mitigating these challenges?	
WOMEN IN FOOD SYSTEM GOVERNANCE	
Do you believe current state strategies, funding policies, and programs are successfully supporting women in the food system?	
How could state strategies, funding policies, and programs be improved?	
What is required in governance for the empowerment of women smallholder farmers in the food system?	
LAND AND GOVERNANCE	
Please describe the predominant land use arrangements your beneficiaries experience?	
Tenure	

Private Ownership	
Traditional Authority	
Collective Ownership	
What role do these arrangements play in the lives/operations of small-scale farmers?	
Tenure	
Private Ownership	
Traditional Authority	
Collective Ownership	
What land strategies do you propose for improved empowerment among beneficiaries?	
What aspect of land strategies and policies require modification?	
LAND GOVERNANCE AND GENDER ASYMMETRY	
Do you identify any gender discrepancies in small-hold farmers access to land?	
Can you identify two specific gender aspects?	
Why do you think they persist?	
How does this effect empowerment of women?	
How does this effect women's autonomy in the food system?	
How can this be modified, at a local level?	
How can this be modified, at a governance level?	
Would you like to volunteer additional experiential information?	
Thank you for your contribution.	

Appendix 4 – Gatekeeper’s Letter (African Conservation Trust)

AFRICAN CONSERVATION TRUST

Conservation ~ Education ~ Innovation

Trust No: IT 2174/2000/PMB NPO No: 030-243 PBO No: 930014758 IUCN No: NG/25190



12 May 2022

To whom it may concern

RE: Permission letter for Mr Finn Kinnear (219079387) to conduct Masters Research

I hereby give Finn Kinnear with student number: 219079387 permission to conduct his research, titled: *A food sovereignty insight into land, gender, and justice in provincial agri-food governance: Lessons from Non-Governmental Organizations in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa*; within the African Conservation Trust and to interview relevant staff that agree to participate.

Name: Francois du Toit
Position: Chief Executive Officer, African Conservation Trust
Date: 12/05/2022

Signed:



Head Office: Wilderness Leadership School, 90 Coedmore Ave, Yellowwood Park, Durban, South Africa
Postal: P.O. Box 310, Link Hills, 3652, South Africa
Tel: (+27) 082 852 6466 **Fax:** (+27) 086-511 7594
Email: info@projectafrica.com **Web:** www.projectafrica.com / www.actheritage.org



Trustees: C.H. Grossmann (Chairman), L.O. van Schalkwyk, O.M.E Mthimkhulu, N.P. Phewa
CEO: S.F. du Toit

Appendix 5 – Gatekeeper’s Letter (Biowatch)



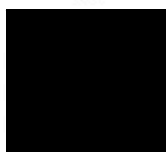
12 May 2022

Prof. Mariam Seedat Khan
University of KwaZulu-Natal
Department of Sociology
232 Mazisi Kunene Avenue
Howard College
Durban 4041

Dear Prof Seedat Khan

This is to confirm that Mr Kinnear (219079387), a registered masters student with yourself, has been granted permission to conduct research among Biowatch staff that agree to participate in his study.

Warm regards



Rose Williams
Director: Biowatch South Africa

Trust No. IT 4212/99

Board Members: Dr David Fig (chairperson), Prof. Loretta Feris, Dr Mvu Ngcoya, Mr David Ntseng,
Ms Beni Williams, Ms Rose Williams, Prof. Rachel Wynberg, Ms Stha Yeni

Appendix 6 – Gatekeeper’s Letter (LIMA)



2 Forresters Lane
Pietermaritzburg, 3201
PO Box 11934
Dorpspruit, 3206
Tel: (033) 342 9043
Fax: 086 411 2897
Email: headoffice@lima.org.za
www.lima.org.za

16 May 2022

To whom it may concern

RE: Permission letter for Mr Finn Kinnear (219079387) to conduct Master’s Research

I hereby give Finn Kinnear with student number: 219079387, permission to conduct his research, titled: *A food sovereignty insight into land, gender, and justice in provincial agri-food governance: Lessons from Non-Governmental Organizations in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa*; within LIMA Rural Development Trust and to interview relevant staff that agree to participate.

Name: Duncan Stewart

Position: Managing Director, LIMA Rural Development Foundation

Date: 16/05/2022

Yours sincerely



**DUNCAN STEWART
MANAGING DIRECTOR**

Appendix 7 – Gatekeeper’s Letter (Fair Food Foundation)

Fair Food Foundation (NPC) Registration No. 1995/003138/08
 Mariannhill Research Farm, Mariannhill Monastery,
 1 Abbot Francis, 10 Monastery Road, Pinetown,
 3601 KZN South Africa
 P.O Box 76355 Marbleray 4037, KZN
 +27 (0)31 826 9672/ (0)83 656 8417
 email: walter@thefairfoodfoundation.org
 Directors: DR Christmas, X Sithole, Q Naidoo



12 May 2022

ATTENTION:
 University of KZN

Dear Mam/Sir

GATEKEEPER LETTER: PERMISSION FOR MR FINN KINNEAR (219079387) TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

We hereby give consent for Mr Kinnear to conduct necessary research with our organization for his Master’s degree research submission. We are prepared to participate in this study.

Thank you

Yours sincerely



Walter Coughlan
 Program Manager